

The Progressive Era

US History ACP
Social Studies Department
Wellesley High School
Academic Year 2012-2013

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**Wellesley High School
Social Studies Department**

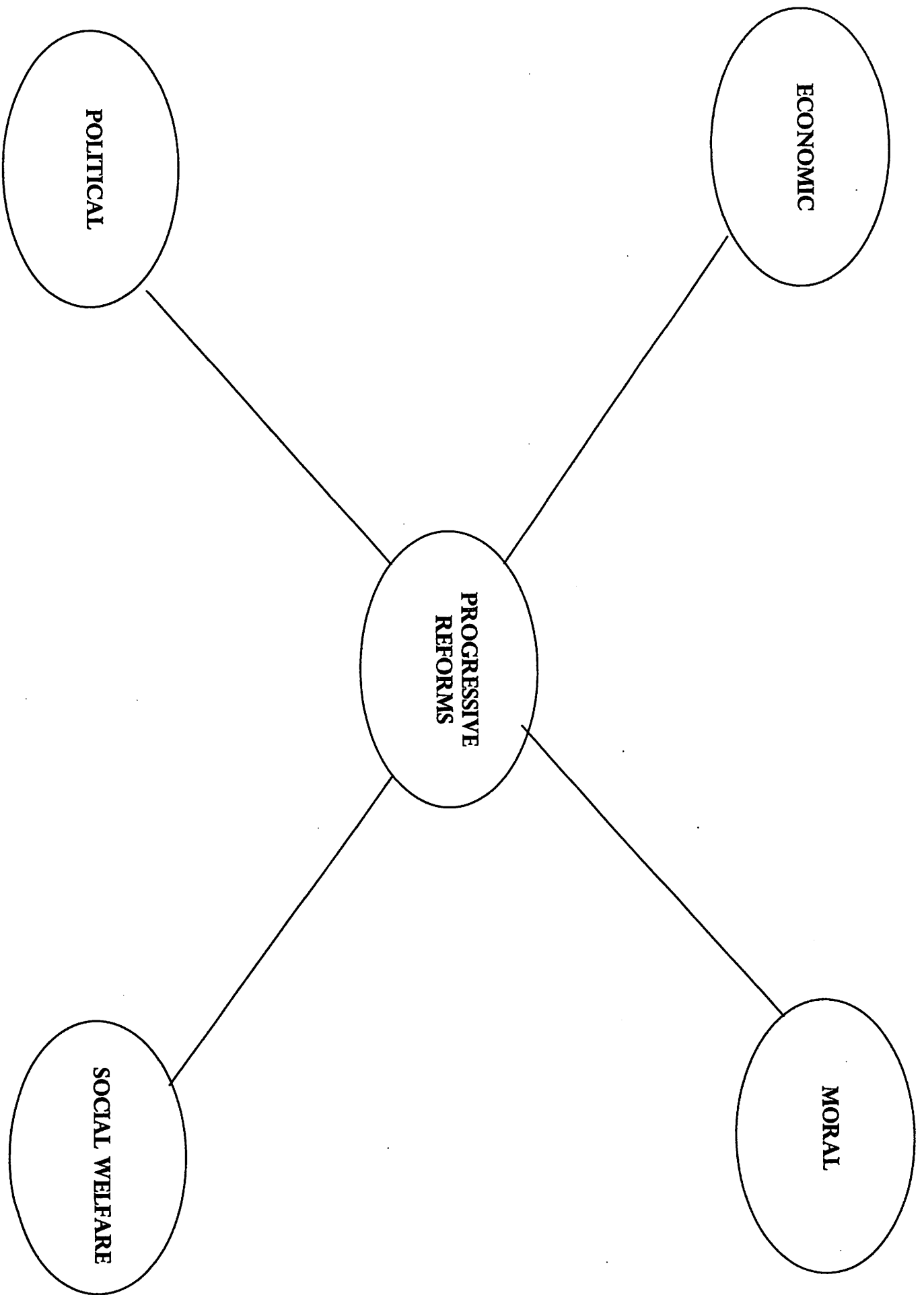
The Progressive Era

Essential Question:

To what extent could the Progressive Era be characterized by a shift from individualism to protecting public interest?

Focus Questions:

- **What problems existed in America at the turn of the century and how did the Progressives attempt to fix these problems?**
- **How did Theodore Roosevelt use the presidency to push for political and social reform?**
- **How has the relationship between the meatpacking industry and the federal government evolved since 1906?**
- **How did women use their public image and the political system to achieve suffrage?**
- **How did Roosevelt, Taft, and Wilson's visions of progressivism differ?**
- **What were the gains and limitations for African-Americans during the Progressive Era?**
 - **Booker T. Washington v. W.E.B. DuBois: Whose strategy was the most effective in improving the economic, political, and social status of the African-American community?**



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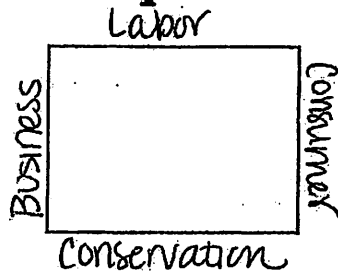
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How the Other Half Lives: Jacob Riis' Photographs

Turn of the century reformers eager to improve the living and working conditions of the urban poor found a powerful weapon in the new medium of documentary photography. Like the muckraking writers who exposed political corruption and corporate excesses, journalists used cameras to shed light on the miseries of contemporary social life. Photographs not only served as witnesses to reality; they also served as agents of change. Images, such as those documented by Jacob Riis, provided compelling visual evidence of the wretchedness of life in the city and the exploitation of the poor in the workplace. These images captured the attention of the public, exposed the need for reform and helped provoke remedial legislation.

1. Examine the Riis photograph assigned to your group and read the caption/titles.
2. Answer the following questions:
 - A. What problems (Be specific) was Riis trying to expose with his photos? What category(ies) of reform would each photo fall under?
 - B. What is your reaction to the fact that Riis frequently "staged" his photographs – positioning people and their possessions for dramatic effect? Does this damage the credibility of his photographs and his message?
3. Discuss/Compare images and interpretations as a whole class.

TR's Square Deal



Directions: Use your textbook chapter 17.3 pages 525-530 (this is in the middle of the section) to find and record information about TR's *Square Deal*.

What is a "bully pulpit"?

What was the Square Deal?

1. BUSINESS- "Trustbuster"

What act did TR use to prosecute trusts?

How do the examples below illustrate that TR was a trustbuster?
Northern Securities Co.

Railroads & Hepburn Act

2. LABOR

How did TR involve himself in the struggles of labor?

con't

How does this make him a unique president?

Coal Strike of 1902

Why did TR get involved?

How did TR end the strike?

3. CONSUMER

Identify when the following acts were passed and how each protected the consumer?

Pure Food and Drug Act

Meat Inspection Act

4. CONSERVATION

What is the difference between conservation and preservation?

Why did TR take an interest in conservation?

When was the Newlands Reclamation Act passed & what was its function?

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When Should The Government Get Involved?

Directions: For each of the following situations write yes if you feel the government should get involved or no if you feel it should not get involved.

- _____ 1. A company has forced all its competitors out of business by secret deals and now has raised prices.
- _____ 2. Evidence suggests that meat-packing companies are selling rotten meat to the public.
- _____ 3. A white man refuses to rent an apartment in his home to a black man,
- _____ 4. A company has achieved a monopoly on its product by underselling all its competitors. It is a very efficient, well-run business.
- _____ 5. Lumber companies are wasting forests that have taken centuries to grow.
- _____ 6. Four railroads in an area have combined into one large railroad, leaving the people there at the mercy of the new monopoly.
- _____ 7. A company refuses to hire anyone unless the person promises not to join a union.
- _____ 8. Evidence suggests that a company does not take precautions to protect its workers. Several workers have been hurt, but the company will not pay benefits to the families.
- _____ 9. Some companies hire mostly children and pay them very low wages.
- _____ 10. Renters charge that their landlord is not making needed repairs in their apartments, which is endangering the renters' health.

Write agree or disagree next to each statement.

- _____ 11. People who inherit money don't deserve to keep it all. They should pay an inheritance tax.
- _____ 12. Rich people should be taxed at a higher rate than poor people.

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1. What was Roosevelt's view on trusts? How did he propose to deal with them? Why did he think it was necessary?

2. How did TR view his role as a politician? How did he use the presidency?

3. As president, how did TR deal with the coal strike of 1902? What was significant about his actions?

4. What were some of the new laws passed to protect consumers?

5. What were his views on conservation? What did he do to protect the American landscape?

6. Overall Reflective Question: How did TR define the presidency? What was his "focus" or main goal?

2. Theodore Roosevelt Roasts Muckrakers (1906)

President Roosevelt, though recognizing some unpalatable truths in Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, was critical. He wrote the author bluntly that Sinclair had said things that should not have been written unless backed up "with testimony that would satisfy an honest man of reasonable intelligence." Privately he declared that Sinclair had reflected unfairly on both honest and dishonest capitalism in Chicago. Finally, nauseated by excessive sensationalism, Roosevelt made the following famous attack (which gave rise to the term muckraker) in a Washington speech. What are the strengths and weaknesses of his argument that hysterical and indiscriminate muckraking was doing more harm than good?

In Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* you may recall the description of the Man with the Muck-rake [manure rake], the man who could look no way but downward, with the muck-rake in his hand; who was offered a celestial crown for his muck-rake, but who would neither look up nor regard the crown he was offered, but continued to rake himself the filth of the floor.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* the Man with the Muck-rake is set forth as the example of him whose vision is fixed on carnal instead of on spiritual things. Yet he also typifies the man who in this life consistently refuses to see aught that is lofty, and fixes his eyes with solemn intentness only on that which is vile and debasing.

Now it is very necessary that we should not flinch from seeing what is vile and debasing. There is filth on the floor, and it must be scraped up with the muck-rake; and there are times and places where this service is the most needed of all the services that can be performed. But the man who never does anything else, who never thinks or speaks or writes save of his feats with the muck-rake, speedily becomes, not a help to society, not an incitement to good, but one of the most potent forces for evil.

There are—in the body politic, economic, and social—many and grave evils, and there is urgent necessity for the sternest war upon them. There should be relentless exposure of and attack upon every evil man, whether politician or businessman; every evil practice, whether in politics, in business, or in social life. I hail as a benefactor every writer or speaker, every man who, on the platform, or in book, magazine, or newspaper, with merciless severity makes such attack, provided always that he in his turn remembers that the attack is of use only if it is absolutely truthful. The liar is no whit better than the thief, and if his mendacity takes the form of slander, he may be worse than most thieves. It puts a premium upon knavery untruthfully to attack an honest man, or even with hysterical exaggeration to assail a bad man with untruth. An epidemic of indiscriminate assault upon character does no good, but very great harm. The soul of every scoundrel is gladdened whenever an honest man is assailed, or even when a scoundrel is untruthfully assailed.

Now, it is easy to twist out of shape what I have just said. . . . Some persons are sincerely incapable of understanding that to denounce mudslinging does not mean

²Theodore Roosevelt, "The Man with the Muck-Rake," *Putnam's Monthly and the Critic* 1 (October 1906): 42-43.

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*Upton Sinclair's The Jungle (1906)
& Eric Schlosser's Fast Food Nation
(2001): A Comparative Analysis*

*Assignment Due Class : Read &
annotate both excerpts and be
prepared to discuss the text &
your analysis in a Socratic Seminar
based on the following Question:*

- 1. What specific elements do these articles contain that make them good examples of investigative journalism?**
- 2. What responsibility should the federal government play in actively trying to solve the problems raised by investigative journalists?**
- 3. How have the following changed since 1906:**
 - a. Conditions of the meat packing industry.**
 - b. Relationship between the meat packing industry and the federal government.**
 - c. Role of muckrackers.**
- 4. Evaluate the effectiveness of the Progressive era. How much progress has been made from 1906 to 2001?**

It gave them pleasure to believe this, for Scully stood as the people's man, and boasted of it boldly when election day came. The packers had wanted a bridge at Ashland Avenue, but they had not been able to get it till they had seen Scully; and it was the same with "Bubbly Creek," which the city had threatened to make the packers cover over, till Scully had come to their aid. "Bubbly Creek" is an arm of the Chicago River, and forms the southern boundary of the yards; all the drainage of the square mile of packing-houses empties into it, so that it is really a great open sewer a hundred or two feet wide. One long arm of it is blind, and the filth stays there forever and a day. The grease and chemicals that are poured into it undergo all sorts of strange transformations, which are the cause of its name; it is constantly in motion, as if huge fish were feeding in it, or great leviathans disporting themselves in its depths. Bubbles of carbonic acid gas will rise to the surface and burst, and make rings two or three feet wide. Here and there the grease and filth have caked solid, and the creek looks like a bed of lava; chickens walk about on it, feeding, and many times an unwary stranger has started to stroll across, and vanished temporarily. The packers used to leave the creek that way, till every now and then the surface would catch on fire and burn furiously, and the fire department would have to come and put it out. Once, however, an ingenious stranger came and started to gather this filth in scows, to make lard out of; then the packers took the cue, and got out an injunction to stop him, and afterwards gathered it themselves. The banks of "Bubbly Creek" are plastered thick with hairs, and this also the packers gather and clean. And there were things even stranger than this, according to the gossip of the men. The packers had secret mains, through which they stole billions of gallons of the city's water. The newspapers had been full of this scandal—once there had even been an investigation, and an actual uncovering of the pipes; but nobody had been punished, and the thing went right on. And then there was the condemned meat industry, with its endless horrors. The people of Chi-

ago saw the government inspectors in Packingtown, and they all took that to mean that they were protected from diseased meat; they did not understand that these hundred and sixty-three inspectors had been appointed at the request of the packers, and that they were paid by the United States government to certify that all the diseased meat was kept in the state. They had no authority beyond that; for the inspection of meat to be sold in the city and state the whole force in Packingtown consisted of three henchmen of the local political machine! And shortly afterward one of these, a physician, made the discovery that the carcasses of steers which had been condemned as tubercular by the government inspectors, and which therefore contained ptomaines, which are deadly poisons, were left upon an open platform and carted away to be sold in the city; and so he insisted that these carcasses be treated with an injection of kerosene—and was ordered to resign the same week! So indignant were the packers that they went farther, and compelled the mayor to abolish the whole bureau of inspection;

*Author's Note: "Rules and Regulations for the Inspection of Live Stock and their Products." United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industries, Order No. 125:—

SECTION 1. Proprietors of slaughterhouses, canning, salting, packing, or rendering establishments engaged in the slaughtering of cattle, sheep, or swine, or the packing of any of their products, the carcasses or products of which are to become subjects of interstate or foreign commerce, shall make application to the Secretary of Agriculture for inspection of said animals and their products. . . .

SECTION 15. Such rejected or condemned animals shall at once be removed by the owners from the pens containing animals which have been inspected and found to be free from disease and fit for human food, and shall be disposed of in accordance with the laws, ordinances, and regulations of the state and municipality in which said rejected or condemned animals are located. . . .

SECTION 25. A microscopic examination for trichinae shall be made of all swine products exported to countries requiring such examination. No microscopic examination will be made of hogs slaughtered for interstate trade, but this examination shall be confined to those intended for the export trade.

Reading # 1 → Upton Sinclair's - The Jungle (1906)

so that since then there has not been even a pretence of any interference with the graft. There was said to be two thousand dollars a week hush-money from the tubercular steers alone; and as much again from the hogs which had died of cholera on the trains, and which you might see any day being loaded into box-cars and hauled away to a place called Globe, in Indiana, where they made a fancy grade of lard.

Jurgis heard of these things little by little, in the gossip of those who were obliged to perpetrate them. It seemed as if every time you met a person from a new department, you heard of new swindles and new crimes. There was, for instance, a Lithuanian who was a cattle-butcher for the plant where Marija had worked, which killed meat for canning only; and to hear this man describe the animals which came to his place would have been worth while for a Dante or a Zola.¹⁴ It seemed that they must have agencies all over the country, to hunt out old and crippled and diseased cattle to be canned. There were cattle which had been fed on "whiskey-malt," the refuse of the breweries, and had become what the men called "steerly"—which means covered with boils. It was a nasty job killing these, for when you plunged your knife into them they would burst and splash foul-smelling stuff into your face; and when a man's sleeves were smeared with blood, and his hands steeped in it, how was he ever to wipe his face, or to clear his eyes so that he could see? It was stuff such as this that made the "embalmed beef" that had killed several times as many United States soldiers as all the bullets of the Spaniards; only the army beef, besides, was not fresh canned, it was old stuff that had been lying for years in the cellars.

Then one Sunday evening, Jurgis sat puffing his pipe by the kitchen stove, and talking with an old fellow whom Jonas had introduced, and who worked in the canning-rooms at Durham's; and so Jurgis learned a few things about the great and only Durham canned goods, which had become a national institution. They were regular alchemists at Durham's; they advertised a mushroom-catsup, and the men

who made it did not know what a mushroom looked like. They advertised "potted chicken,"—and it was like the boarding-house soup of the comic papers, through which a chicken had walked with rubbers on. Perhaps they had a secret process for making chickens chemically—who knows? said Jurgis's friend; the things that went into the mixture were tripe, and the fat of pork, and beef suet, and hearts of beef, and finally the waste ends of veal, when they had any. They put these up in several grades, and sold them at several prices; but the contents of the cans all came out of the same hopper. And then there was "potted game" and "potted grouse," "potted ham," and "devilled ham"—devyled, as the men called it. "De-yled" ham was made out of the waste ends of smoked beef that were too small to be sliced by the machines; and also tripe, dyed with chemicals so that it would not show white; and trimmings of hams and corned beef; and potatoes, skins and all; and finally the hard cartilaginous gullets of beef, after the tongues had been cut out. All this ingenious mixture was ground up and flavored with spices to make it taste like something. Anybody who could invent a new imitation had been sure of a fortune from old Durham, said Jurgis's informant; but it was hard to think of anything new in a place where so many sharp wits had been at work for so long; where men welcomed tuberculosis in the cattle they were feeding, because it made them fatten more quickly; and where they bought up all the old rancid butter left over in the grocery-stores of a continent, and "oxidized" it by a forced-air process, to take away the odor, rechurned it with skim-milk, and sold it in bricks in the cities! Up to a year or two ago it had been the custom to kill horses in the yards—ostensibly for fertilizer; but after long agitation the newspapers had been able to make the public realize that the horses were being canned. Now it was against the law to kill horses in Packingtown, and the law was really complied with—for the present, at any rate. Any day, however, one might see sharp-horned and shaggy-haired creatures running with the sheep—and yet what a job you would have to get the public to believe that a good

part of what it buys for lamb and mutton is really goat's flesh!

There was another interesting set of statistics that a person might have gathered in Packingtown—those of the various afflictions of the workers. When Jurgis had first inspected the packing-plants with Szedvilas, he had marvelled while he listened to the tale of all the things that were made out of the carcasses of animals, and of all the lesser industries that were maintained there; now he found that each one of these lesser industries was a separate little inferno, in its way as horrible as the killing-beds, the source and fountain of them all. The workers in each of them had their own peculiar diseases. And the wandering visitor might be sceptical about all the swindles, but he could not be sceptical about these, for the worker bore the evidence of them about on his own person—generally he had only to hold out his hand.

There were the men in the pickle-rooms, for instance, where old Antanas had gotten his death; scarce a one of these that had not some spot of horror on his person. Let a man so much as scrape his finger pushing a truck in the pickle-rooms, and he might have a sore that would put him out of the world; all the joints in his fingers might be eaten by the acid, one by one. Of the butchers and floorsmen, the beef-boners and trimmers, and all those who used knives, you could scarcely find a person who had the use of his thumb; time and time again the base of it had been slashed, till it was a mere lump of flesh against which the man pressed the knife to hold it. The hands of these men would be criss-crossed with cuts, until you could no longer pretend to count them or to trace them. They would have no nails,—they had worn them off pulling hides; their knuckles were swollen so that their fingers spread out like a fan. There were men who worked in the cooking-rooms, in the midst of steam and sickening odors, by artificial light; in these rooms the germs of tuberculosis might live for two years, but the supply was renewed every hour. There were the beef-luggers, who carried two-hundred-pound quarters into

the refrigerator-cars; a fearful kind of work, that began at four o'clock in the morning, and that wore out the most powerful men in a few years. There were those who worked in the chilling-rooms, and whose special disease was rheumatism; the time-limit that a man could work in the chilling-rooms was said to be five years. There were the wool-pluckers, whose hands went to pieces even sooner than the hands of the pickle-men; for the pelts of the sheep had to be painted with acid to loosen the wool, and then the pluckers had to pull out this wool with their bare hands, till the acid had eaten their fingers off. There were those who made the tins for the canned-meat; and their hands, too, were a maze of cuts, and each cut represented a chance for blood-poisoning. Some worked at the stamping-machines, and it was very seldom that one could work long there at the pace that was set, and not give out and forget himself, and have a part of his hand chopped off. There were the "hoisters," as they were called, whose task it was to press the lever which lifted the dead cattle off the floor. They ran along upon a rafter, peering down through the damp and the steam; and as old Durham's architects had not built the killing-room for the convenience of the hoisters, at every few feet they would have to stoop under a beam, say four feet above the one they ran on; which got them into the habit of stooping, so that in a few years they would be walking like chimpanzees. Worst of any, however, were the fertilizer-men, and those who served in the cooking-rooms. These people could not be shown to the visitor,—for the odor of a fertilizer-man would scare any ordinary visitor at a hundred yards, and as for the other men, who worked in tank-rooms full of steam, and in some of which there were open vats near the level of the floor, their peculiar trouble was that they fell into the vats; and when they were fished out, there was never enough of them left to be worth exhibiting,—sometimes they would be overlooked for days, till all but the bones of them had gone out to the world as Durham's Pure Leaf Lard!

END HERE

8 / the most dangerous job



ONE NIGHT I VISIT a slaughterhouse somewhere in the High Plains. The slaughterhouse is one of the nation's largest. About five thousand head of cattle enter it every day, single file, and leave in a different form. Someone who has access to the plant, who's upset by its working conditions, offers to give me a tour. The slaughterhouse is an immense building, gray and square, about three stories high, with no windows on the front and no architectural clues to what's happening inside. My friend gives me a chain-mail apron and gloves, suggesting I try them on. Workers on the line wear about eight pounds of chain mail beneath their white coats, shiny steel armor that covers their hands, wrists, stomach, and back. The chain mail's designed to protect workers from cutting themselves and from being cut by other workers. But knives somehow manage to get past it. My host hands me some Wellingtons, the kind of knee-high rubber boots that English gentlemen wear in the countryside. "Tuck your pants into the boots," he says. "We'll be walking through some blood."

I put on a hardhat and climb a stairway. The sounds get louder, factory sounds, the noise of power tools and machinery, bursts of compressed air. We start at the end of the line, the fabricating room. Workers call it "fab." When we step inside, fab seems familiar: steel catwalks, pipes along the walls, a vast room, a maze of conveyor belts. This could be the Lamb Weston plant in Idaho, except hunks of red meat ride the belts instead of french fries. Some machines assemble cardboard boxes, others vacuum-seal subprimals of beef in clear plastic. The workers look extremely busy, but there's nothing unsettling about this part of the plant. You see meat like this all the time in the back of your local supermarket.

The fab room is cooled to about 40 degrees, and as you head up the

Reading #2: Eric Schlosser's
Fast Food Nation
(2001)

line, the feel of the place starts to change. The pieces of meat get bigger. Workers — about half of them women, almost all of them young and Latino — slice meat with long slender knives. They stand at a table that's chest high, grab meat off a conveyor belt, trim away fat, throw meat back on the belt, toss the scraps onto a conveyor belt above them, and then grab more meat, all in a matter of seconds. I'm now struck by how many workers there are, hundreds of them, pressed close together, constantly moving, slicing. You see hardhats, white coats, flashes of steel. Nobody is smiling or chatting, they're too busy, anxiously trying not to fall behind. An old man walks past me, pushing a blue plastic barrel filled with scraps. A few workers carve the meat with Whizzards, small electric knives that have spinning round blades. The Whizzards look like the Norelco razors that Santa rides in the TV ads. I notice that a few of the women near me are sweating, even though the place is freezing cold.

Sides of beef suspended from an overhead trolley swing toward a group of men. Each worker has a large knife in one hand and a steel hook in the other. They grab the meat with their hooks and attack it fiercely with their knives. As they hack away, using all their strength, grunting, the place suddenly feels different, primordial. The machinery seems beside the point, and what's going on before me has been going on for thousands of years — the meat, the hook, the knife, men straining to cut more meat.

On the kill floor, what I see no longer unfolds in a logical manner. It's one strange image after another. A worker with a power saw slices cattle into halves as though they were two-by-fours, and then the halves swing by me into the cooler. It feels like a slaughterhouse now. Dozens of cattle, stripped of their skins, dangle on chains from their hind legs. My host stops and asks how I feel, if I want to go any further. This is where some people get sick. I feel fine, determined to see the whole process, the world that's been deliberately hidden. The kill floor is hot and humid. It stinks of manure. Cattle have a body temperature of about 101 degrees, and there are a lot of them in the room. Carcasses swing so fast along the rail that you have to keep an eye on them constantly, dodge them, watch your step, or one will slam you and throw you onto the bloody concrete floor. It happens to workers all the time.

I see: a man reach inside cattle and pull out their kidneys with his bare hands, then drop the kidneys down a metal chute, over and over

again, as each animal passes by him; a stainless steel rack of tongues; Whizzards peeling meat off decapitated heads, picking them almost as clean as the white skulls painted by Georgia O'Keeffe. We wade through blood that's ankle deep and that pours down drains into huge vats below us. As we approach the start of the line, for the first time I hear the steady *pop, pop, pop* of live animals being stunned.

Now the cattle suspended above me look just like the cattle I've seen on ranches for years, but these ones are upside down swinging on hooks. For a moment, the sight seems unreal; there are so many of them, a herd of them, lifeless. And then I see a few hind legs still kicking, a final reflex action, and the reality comes hard and clear.

For eight and a half hours, a worker called a "sticker" does nothing but stand in a river of blood, being drenched in blood, slitting the neck of a steer every ten seconds or so, severing its carotid artery. He uses a long knife and must hit exactly the right spot to kill the animal humanely. He hits that spot again and again. We walk up a slippery metal stairway and reach a small platform, where the production line begins. A man turns and smiles at me. He wears safety goggles and a hardhat. His face is splattered with gray matter and blood. He is the "knocker," the man who welcomes cattle to the building. Cattle walk down a narrow chute and pause in front of him, blocked by a gate, and then he shoots them in the head with a captive bolt stunner — a compressed-air gun attached to the ceiling by a long hose — which fires a steel bolt that knocks the cattle unconscious. The animals keep strolling up, oblivious to what comes next, and he stands over them and shoots. For eight and a half hours, he just shoots. As I stand there, he misses a few times and shoots the same animal twice. As soon as the steer falls, a worker grabs one of its hind legs, shackles it to a chain, and the chain lifts the huge animal into the air.

I watch the knocker knock cattle for a couple of minutes. The animals are powerful and imposing one moment and then gone in an instant, suspended from a rail, ready for carving. A steer slips from its chain, falls to the ground, and gets its head caught in one end of a conveyor belt. The production line stops as workers struggle to free the steer, stunned but alive, from the machinery. I've seen enough.

I step out of the building into the cool night air and follow the path that leads cattle into the slaughterhouse. They pass me, driven toward the building by workers with long white sticks that seem to glow in the dark. One steer, perhaps sensing instinctively what the other don't,

turns and tries to run. But workers drive him back to join the rest. The cattle lazily walk single-file toward the muffled sounds, *pop, pop, pop*, coming from the open door.

The path has hairpin turns that prevent cattle from seeing what's in store and keep them relaxed. As the ramp gently slopes upward, the animals may think they're headed for another truck, another road trip — and they are, in unexpected ways. The ramp widens as it reaches ground level and then leads to a large cattle pen with wooden fences, a corral that belongs in a meadow, not here. As I walk along the fence, a group of cattle approach me, looking me straight in the eye, like dogs hoping for a treat, and follow me out of some mysterious impulse. I stop and try to absorb the whole scene: the cool breeze, the cattle and their gentle lowing, a cloudless sky, steam rising from the plant in the moonlight. And then I notice that the building does have one window, a small square of light on the second floor. It offers a glimpse of what's hidden behind this huge blank façade. Through the little window you can see bright red carcasses on hooks, going round and round.

sharp knives

KNOCKER, STICKER, SHACKLER, RUMPER, First Legger, Knuckle Dropper, Navel Boner, Splitter Top/Bottom Butt, Feed Kill Chain — the names of job assignments at a modern slaughterhouse convey some of the brutality inherent in the work. Meatpacking is now the most dangerous job in the United States. The injury rate in a slaughterhouse is about three times higher than the rate in a typical American factory. Every year more than one-quarter of the meatpacking workers in this country — roughly forty thousand men and women — suffer an injury or a work-related illness that requires medical attention beyond first aid. There is strong evidence that these numbers, compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, understate the number of meatpacking injuries that occur. Thousands of additional injuries and illnesses most likely go unrecorded.

Despite the use of conveyer belts, forklifts, dehiding machines, and a variety of power tools, most of the work in the nation's slaughterhouses is still performed by hand. Poultry plants can be largely mechanized, thanks to the breeding of chickens that are uniform in size. The birds in some Tyson factories are killed, plucked, gutted, beheaded, and sliced into cutlets by robots and machines. But cattle

still come in all sizes and shapes, varying in weight by hundreds of pounds. The lack of a standardized steer has hindered the mechanization of beef plants. In one crucial respect meatpacking work has changed little in the past hundred years. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, amid an era of extraordinary technological advance, the most important tool in a modern slaughterhouse is a sharp knife.

Lacerations are the most common injuries suffered by meatpackers, who often stab themselves or stab someone working nearby. Tendinitis and cumulative trauma disorders are also quite common. Meatpacking workers routinely develop back problems, shoulder problems, carpal tunnel syndrome, and "trigger finger" (a syndrome in which a finger becomes frozen in a curled position). Indeed, the rate of these cumulative trauma injuries in the meatpacking industry is far higher than the rate in any other American industry. It is roughly thirty-three times higher than the national average in industry. Many slaughterhouse workers make a knife cut every two or three seconds, which adds up to about 10,000 cuts during an eight-hour shift. If the knife has become dull, additional pressure is placed on the worker's tendons, joints, and nerves. A dull knife can cause pain to extend from the cutting hand all the way down the spine.

Workers often bring their knives home and spend at least forty minutes a day keeping the edges smooth, sharp, and sanded, with no pits. One IBP worker, a small Guatemalan woman with graying hair, spoke with me in the cramped kitchen of her mobile home. As a pot of beans cooked on the stove, she sat in a wooden chair, gently rocking, telling the story of her life, of her journey north in search of work, the whole time sharpening big knives in her lap as though she were knitting a sweater.

The "IBP revolution" has been directly responsible for many of the hazards that meatpacking workers now face. One of the leading determinants of the injury rate at a slaughterhouse today is the speed of the disassembly line. The faster it runs, the more likely that workers will get hurt. The old meatpacking plants in Chicago slaughtered about 50 cattle an hour. Twenty years ago, new plants in the High Plains slaughtered about 175 cattle an hour. Today some plants slaughter up to 400 cattle an hour — about half a dozen animals every minute, sent down a single production line, carved by workers desperate not to fall behind. While trying to keep up with the flow of meat, workers often neglect to resharpen their knives and thereby place more stress on their bodies. As the pace increases, so does the risk of accidental cuts and

EAST FOOD NATION, ERIC SCHLOSSER
NY: HUNTERTON MIFFLIN 2002

stabbings. "I could always tell the line speed," a former Monfort nurse told me, "by the number of people with lacerations coming into my office." People usually cut themselves; nevertheless, everyone on the line tries to stay alert. Meatpackers often work within inches of each other, wielding large knives. A simple mistake can cause a serious injury. A former IBP worker told me about boning knives suddenly flying out of hands and ricocheting off of machinery. "They're very flexible," she said, "and they'll spring on you . . . zwing, and they're gone."

Much like french fry factories, beef slaughterhouses often operate at profit margins as low as a few pennies a pound. The three meatpacking giants — ConAgra, IBP, and Excel — try to increase their earnings by maximizing the volume of production at each plant. Once a slaughterhouse is up and running, fully staffed, the profits it will earn are directly related to the speed of the line. A faster pace means higher profits. Market pressures now exert a perverse influence on the management of beef plants: the same factors that make these slaughterhouses relatively inefficient (the lack of mechanization, the reliance on human labor) encourage companies to make them even more dangerous (by speeding up the pace).

The unrelenting pressure of trying to keep up with the line has encouraged widespread methamphetamine use among meatpackers. Workers taking "crank" feel charged and self-confident, ready for anything. Supervisors have been known to sell crank to their workers or to supply it free in return for certain favors, such as working a second shift. Workers who use methamphetamine may feel energized and invincible, but are actually putting themselves at much greater risk of having an accident. For obvious reasons, a modern slaughterhouse is not a safe place to be high.

In the days when labor unions were strong, workers could complain about excessive line speeds and injury rates without fear of getting fired. Today only one-third of IBP's workers belong to a union. Most of the nonunion workers are recent immigrants; many are illegals; and they are generally employed "at will." That means they can be fired without warning, for just about any reason. Such an arrangement does not encourage them to lodge complaints. Workers who have traveled a great distance for this job, who have families to support, who are earning ten times more an hour in a meatpacking plant than they could possibly earn back home, are wary about speaking out and losing everything. The line speeds and labor costs at IBP's nonunion plants now set the standard for the rest of the industry. Every other company

must try to produce beef as quickly and cheaply as IBP does; slowing the pace to protect workers can lead to a competitive disadvantage.

Again and again workers told me that they are under tremendous pressure not to report injuries. The annual bonuses of plant foremen and supervisors are often based in part on the injury rate of their workers. Instead of creating a safer workplace, these bonus schemes encourage slaughterhouse managers to make sure that accidents and injuries go unreported. Missing fingers, broken bones, deep lacerations, and amputated limbs are difficult to conceal from authorities. But the dramatic and catastrophic injuries in a slaughterhouse are greatly outnumbered by less visible, though no less debilitating, ailments: torn muscles, slipped disks, pinched nerves.

If a worker agrees not to report an injury, a supervisor will usually shift him or her to an easier job for a while, providing some time to heal. If the injury seems more serious, a Mexican worker is often given the opportunity to return home for a while, to recuperate there, then come back to his or her slaughterhouse job in the United States. Workers who abide by these unwritten rules are treated respectfully; those who disobey are likely to be punished and made an example. As one former IBP worker explained, "They're trying to deter you, period, from going to the doctor."

From a purely economic point of view, injured workers are a drag on profits. They are less productive. Getting rid of them makes a good deal of financial sense, especially when new workers are readily available and inexpensive to train. Injured workers are often given some of the most unpleasant tasks in the slaughterhouse. Their hourly wages are cut. And through a wide variety of unobvious means they are encouraged to quit.

Not all supervisors in a slaughterhouse behave like Simon Legree, shouting at workers, cursing them, belittling their injuries, always pushing them to move faster. But enough supervisors act that way to warrant the comparison. Production supervisors tend to be men in their late twenties and early thirties. Most are Anglos and don't speak Spanish, although more and more Latinos are being promoted to the job. They earn about \$30,000 a year, plus bonuses and benefits. In many rural communities, being a supervisor at a meatpacking plant is one of the best jobs in town. It comes with a fair amount of pressure: a supervisor must meet production goals, keep the number of recorded injuries low, and most importantly, keep the meat flowing down the line without interruption. The job also brings enormous power. Each

supervisor is like a little dictator in his or her section of the plant, largely free to boss, fire, berate, or reassign workers. That sort of power can lead to all sorts of abuses, especially when the hourly workers being supervised are women.

Many women told me stories about being fondled and grabbed on the production line, and the behavior of supervisors sets the tone for the other male workers. In February of 1999, a federal jury in Des Moines awarded \$2.4 million to a female employee at an IBP slaughterhouse. According to the woman's testimony, coworkers had "screamed obscenities and rubbed their bodies against hers while supervisors laughed." Seven months later, Monfort agreed to settle a lawsuit filed by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on behalf of fourteen female workers in Texas. As part of the settlement, the company paid the women \$900,000 and vowed to establish formal procedures for handling sexual harassment complaints. In their lawsuit the women alleged that supervisors at a Monfort plant in Cactus, Texas, pressured them for dates and sex, and that male coworkers groped them, kissed them, and used animal parts in a sexually explicit manner.

The sexual relationships between supervisors and "hourlies" are for the most part consensual. Many female workers optimistically regard sex with their supervisor as a way to gain a secure place in American society, a green card, a husband — or at the very least a transfer to an easier job at the plant. Some supervisors become meatpacking Casanovas, engaging in multiple affairs. Sex, drugs, and slaughterhouses may seem an unlikely combination, but as one former Monfort employee told me: "Inside those walls is a different world that obeys different laws." Late on the second shift, when it's dark outside, assignments take place in locker rooms, staff rooms, and parked cars, even on the catwalk over the kill floor.

the worst

SOME OF THE MOST dangerous jobs in meatpacking today are performed by the late-night cleaning crews. A large proportion of these workers are illegal immigrants. They are considered "independent contractors," employed not by the meatpacking firms but by sanitation companies. They earn hourly wages that are about one-third lower than those of regular production employees. And their work is

so hard and so horrendous that words seem inadequate to describe it. The men and women who now clean the nation's slaughterhouses may arguably have the worst job in the United States. "It takes a really dedicated person," a former member of a cleaning crew told me, "or a really desperate person to get the job done."

When a sanitation crew arrives at a meatpacking plant, usually around midnight, it faces a mess of monumental proportions. Three to four thousand cattle, each weighing about a thousand pounds, have been slaughtered there that day. The place has to be clean by sunrise. Some of the workers wear water-resistant clothing; most don't. Their principal cleaning tool is a high-pressure hose that shoots a mixture of water and chlorine heated to about 180 degrees. As the water is sprayed, the plant fills with a thick, heavy fog. Visibility drops to as little as five feet. The conveyor belts and machinery are running. Workers stand on the belts, spraying them, riding them like moving sidewalks, as high as fifteen feet off the ground. Workers climb ladders with hoses and spray the catwalks. They get under tables and conveyor belts, climbing right into the bloody muck, cleaning out grease, fat, manure, leftover scraps of meat.

Glasses and safety goggles fog up. The inside of the plant heats up; temperatures soon exceed 100 degrees. "It's hot, and it's foggy, and you can't see anything," a former sanitation worker said. The crew members can't see or hear each other when the machinery's running. They routinely spray each other with burning hot, chemical-laden water. They are sickened by the fumes. Jesus, a soft-spoken employee of DCS Sanitation Management, Inc., the company that IBP uses in many of its plants, told me that every night on the job he gets terrible headaches. "You feel it in your head," he said. "You feel it in your stomach, like you want to throw up." A friend of his vomits whenever they clean the rendering area. Other workers tease the young man as he retches. Jesus says the stench in rendering is so powerful that it won't wash off; no matter how much soap you use after a shift, the smell comes home with you, seeps from your pores.

One night while Jesus was cleaning, a coworker forgot to turn off a machine, lost two fingers, and went into shock. An ambulance came and took him away, as everyone else continued to clean. He was back at work the following week. "If one hand is no good," the supervisor told him, "use the other." Another sanitation worker lost an arm in a machine. Now he folds towels in the locker room. The scariest job, according to Jesus, is cleaning the vents on the roof of the slaughter-

house. The vents become clogged with grease and dried blood. In the winter, when everything gets icy and the winds pick up, Jesus worries that a sudden gust will blow him off the roof into the darkness.

Although official statistics are not kept, the death rate among slaughterhouse sanitation crews is extraordinarily high. They are the ultimate in disposable workers: illegal, illiterate, impoverished, untrained. The nation's worst job can end in just about the worst way. Sometimes these workers are literally ground up and reduced to nothing.

A brief description of some cleaning-crew accidents over the past decade says more about the work and the danger than any set of statistics. At the Monfort plant in Grand Island, Nebraska, Richard Skala was beheaded by a dehiding machine. Carlos Vincente — an employee of T and G Service Company, a twenty-eight-year-old Guatemalan who'd been in the United States for only a week — was pulled into the cogs of a conveyor belt at an Excel plant in Fort Morgan, Colorado, and torn apart. Lorenzo Marin, Sr., an employee of DCS Sanitation, fell from the top of a skinning machine while cleaning it with a high-pressure hose, struck his head on the concrete floor of an IBP plant in Columbus Junction, Iowa, and died. Another employee of DCS Sanitation, Salvador Hernandez-Gonzalez, had his head crushed by a pork-loin processing machine at an IBP plant in Madison, Nebraska. The same machine had fatally crushed the head of another worker, Ben Barone, a few years earlier. At a National Beef plant in Liberal, Kansas, Homer Stull climbed into a blood-collection tank to clean it, a filthy tank thirty feet high. Stull was overcome by hydrogen sulfide fumes. Two coworkers climbed into the tank and tried to rescue him. All three men died. Eight years earlier, Henry Wolf had been overcome by hydrogen sulfide fumes while cleaning the very same tank; Gary Sanders had tried to rescue him; both men died; and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) later fined National Beef for its negligence. The fine was \$480 for each man's death.

don't get caught

DURING THE SAME YEARS when the working conditions at America's meatpacking plants became more dangerous — when line speeds increased and illegal immigrants replaced skilled workers — the fed-

eral government greatly reduced the enforcement of health and safety laws. OSHA had long been despised by the nation's manufacturers, who considered the agency a source of meddlesome regulations and unnecessary red tape. When Ronald Reagan was elected president in 1980, OSHA was already underfunded and understaffed: its 1,300 inspectors were responsible for the safety of more than 5 million workplaces across the country. A typical American employer could expect an OSHA inspection about once every eighty years. Nevertheless, the Reagan administration was determined to reduce OSHA's authority even further, as part of the push for deregulation. The number of OSHA inspectors was eventually cut by 20 percent, and in 1981 the agency adopted a new policy of "voluntary compliance." Instead of arriving unannounced at a factory and performing an inspection, OSHA employees were required to look at a company's injury log before setting foot inside the plant. If the records showed an injury rate at the factory lower than the national average for all manufacturers, the OSHA inspector had to turn around and leave at once — without entering the plant, examining its equipment, or talking to any of its workers. These injury logs were kept and maintained by company officials.

For most of the 1980s OSHA's relationship with the meatpacking industry was far from adversarial. While the number of serious injuries rose, the number of OSHA inspections fell. The death of a worker on the job was punished with a fine of just a few hundred dollars. At a gathering of meat company executives in October of 1987, OSHA's safety director, Barry White, promised to change federal safety standards that "appear amazingly stupid to you or overburdening or just not useful." According to an account of the meeting later published in the *Chicago Tribune*, the safety director at OSHA — the federal official most responsible for protecting the lives of meatpacking workers — acknowledged his own lack of qualification for the job. "I know very well that you know more about safety and health in the meat industry than I do," White told the executives. "And you know more about safety and health in the meat industry than any single employee at OSHA."

OSHA's voluntary compliance policy did indeed reduce the number of recorded injuries in meatpacking plants. It did not, however, reduce the number of people getting hurt. It merely encouraged companies, in the words of a subsequent congressional investigation, "to understate injuries, to falsify records, and to cover up accidents."

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of Sinclair's charges. When it confirmed the accuracy of the book, Roosevelt called for legislation requiring mandatory federal inspection of all meat sold through interstate commerce, accurate labeling and dating of canned meat products, and a fee-based regulatory system that made meatpackers pay the cost of cleaning up their own industry.

The powerful magnates of the Beef Trust responded by vilifying Roosevelt and Upton Sinclair, dismissing their accusations, and launching a public relations campaign to persuade the American people that nothing was wrong. "Meat and food products, generally speaking," J. Ogden Armour claimed in a *Saturday Evening Post* article, "are handled as carefully and circumspectly in large packing houses as they are in the average home kitchen." Testifying before Congress, Thomas Wilson, an executive at Morris & Company, said that blame for the occasional sanitary lapse lay not with the policies of industry executives, but with the greed and laziness of slaughterhouse workers. "Men are men," Wilson contended, "and it is pretty hard to control some of them." After an angry legislative battle, Congress narrowly passed the Meat Inspection Act of 1906, a watered-down version of Roosevelt's proposals that made taxpayers pay for the new regulations.

The meatpacking industry's response to *The Jungle* established a pattern that would be repeated throughout the twentieth century, whenever health concerns were raised about the nation's beef. The industry has repeatedly denied that problems exist, impugned the motives of its critics, fought vehemently against federal oversight, sought to avoid any responsibility for outbreaks of food poisoning, and worked hard to shift the costs of food safety efforts onto the general public. The industry's strategy has been driven by a profound antipathy to any government regulation that might lower profits. "There is no limit to the expense that might be put upon us," the Beef Trust's Wilson said in 1906, arguing against a federal inspection plan that would have cost meatpackers less than a dime per head of cattle. "[Our] contention is that in all reasonableness and fairness we are paying all we care to pay."

During the 1980s, as the risks of widespread contamination increased, the meatpacking industry blocked the use of microbial testing in the federal meat inspection program. A panel appointed by the National Academy of Sciences warned in 1985 that the nation's meat in-

begin w/ this section
all we care to pay

"THIS IS NO FAIRY STORY and no joke," Upton Sinclair wrote in 1906; "the meat would be shoveled into carts, and the man who did the shoveling would not trouble to lift out a rat even when he saw one — there were things that went into the sausage in comparison with which a poisoned rat was a tidbit." Sinclair described a long list of practices in the meatpacking industry that threatened the health of consumers: the routine slaughter of diseased animals, the use of chemicals such as borax and glycerine to disguise the smell of spoiled beef, the deliberate mislabeling of canned meat, the tendency of workers to urinate and defecate on the kill floor. After reading *The Jungle* President Theodore Roosevelt ordered an independent investigation

spection program was hopelessly outdated, still relying on visual and olfactory clues to find disease while dangerous pathogens slipped past undetected. Three years later, another National Academy of Sciences panel warned that the nation's public health infrastructure was in serious disarray, limiting its ability to track or prevent the spread of newly emerging pathogens. Without additional funding for public health measures, outbreaks and epidemics of new diseases were virtually inevitable. "Who knows what crisis will be next?" said the chairman of the panel.

Nevertheless, the Reagan and Bush administrations cut spending on public health measures and staffed the U.S. Department of Agriculture with officials far more interested in government deregulation than in food safety. The USDA became largely indistinguishable from the industries it was meant to police. President Reagan's first secretary of agriculture was in the hog business. His second was the president of the American Meat Institute (formerly known as the American Meat Packers Association). And his choice to run the USDA's Food Marketing and Inspection Service was a vice president of the National Cattlemen's Association. President Bush later appointed the president of the National Cattlemen's Association to the job.

Two months after the threat of deadly new outbreaks was outlined by the National Academy of Sciences, the USDA launched the Streamlined Inspection System for Cattle (SIS-C). The program was designed to reduce the presence of federal inspectors in the nation's slaughterhouses, allowing company employees to assume most of the food safety tasks. According to the Reagan administration, the Streamlined Inspection System for Cattle would help the USDA shrink its budget and deploy its manpower more efficiently. Freed from the hassles of continuous federal inspection, SIS-C also enabled meatpacking companies to increase their line speeds. Despite the fact that IBP and Morrell had just a year earlier been caught falsifying safety records and keeping two sets of injury logs, the meatpacking industry was given the authority to inspect its own meat. SIS-C was launched in 1988 as a pilot program at five major slaughterhouses that supplied about one-fifth of the beef consumed in the United States. The USDA hoped that within a decade the new system would extend nationwide and that the number of federal meat inspectors would be cut by half.

A 1992 USDA study of the Streamlined Inspection System for Cattle concluded that beef produced under the program was no dirtier than beef produced at slaughterhouses fully staffed by federal inspectors.

tors. But the accuracy of that study was thrown into doubt by the revelation that meatpacking firms had sometimes been told in advance when USDA investigators would be arriving at SIS-C slaughterhouses. The Monfort beef plant in Greeley, Colorado, was one of the original participants in the program. According to federal inspectors there, the meat produced under the Streamlined Inspection System "had never been filthier." At SIS-C slaughterhouses, visibly diseased animals — cattle infected with measles and tapeworms, covered with abscesses — were being slaughtered. Poorly trained company inspectors were allowing the shipment of beef contaminated with fecal material, hair, insects, metal shavings, urine, and vomit.

The Streamlined Inspection System for Cattle was discontinued in 1993, following the Jack in the Box outbreak. Cutbacks in federal inspection seemed difficult to justify, when hundreds of children had been made seriously ill by tainted hamburgers. Although the precise source of *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination was never identified, some of the beef used by Jack in the Box came from an SIS-C plant — a Monfort slaughterhouse. The meatpacking industry's immediate reaction to the outbreak was an attempt to shift the blame elsewhere. As children continued to be hospitalized after eating Jack in the Box hamburgers, J. Patrick Boyle, the head of the American Meat Institute said, "This recent outbreak sheds light on a nationwide problem: inconsistent information about proper cooking temperatures for hamburger." The meat industry's allies at the USDA also seemed remarkably laissez-faire, noting that the contaminated hamburger patties had not violated any federal standards. According to Dr. Russell Cross, head of the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, "The presence of bacteria in raw meat, including *E. coli* O157:H7, although undesirable, is unavoidable, and not cause for condemnation of the product." Members of the newly elected Clinton administration disagreed. Dr. Cross, a Bush appointee, resigned. On September 29, 1993, his replacement, Michael R. Taylor, announced that *E. coli* O157:H7 would henceforth be considered an illegal adulterant, that no ground beef contaminated with it could be sold, and that the USDA would begin random microbial testing to remove it from the nation's food supply. The American Meat Institute immediately filed a lawsuit in federal court to prevent the USDA from testing any ground beef for *E. coli* O157:H7. Judge James R. Rowlin, a conservative and a cattleman, dismissed the meatpacking industry's arguments and allowed the testing to proceed.

Smith brought to consummation only during his postwar governorship of New York, was of slow development in the Progressive era itself. The uneasy and partial but occasionally effective union between the idealistic reformer and the boss foreshadowed only vaguely a development that was to reach its peak under Franklin D. Roosevelt.⁵

II • Muckraking: the Revolution in Journalism

To an extraordinary degree the work of the Progressive movement rested upon its journalism. The fundamental critical achievement of American Progressivism was the business of exposure, and journalism was the chief occupational source of its creative writers. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the Progressive mind was characteristically a journalistic mind, and that its characteristic contribution was that of the socially responsible reporter-reformer. The muckraker was a central figure. Before there could be action, there must be information and exhorta-

⁵ Nothing I have said in the text should be taken to imply that the urban machines based upon immigrant support were the first or only ones to develop a spirit of political participation based upon the economics of self-interest. Of course the whole nineteenth-century sectional-interest scramble, with its tariff trading and its pork-barrel procedures, would belie any such notion, and it is worth adding that this political tradition was represented by Anglo-Saxon politicians, many of them with rural backgrounds. The notion that politics should be an area for high-minded and disinterested service was revived (it was by no means new in America among them) by the Mugwump idealists of the late nineteenth century. After them it became a creed with a much broader following during the Progressive era. I have singled out, as a phenomenon of the Progressive era, the antipathy between the ethos of the boss-machine-immigrant complex and that of the reformer-individualist-Anglo-Saxon complex not because I hold it to be the only struggle going on at the time but because it serves as an archetypical illustration of undercurrents of political feeling that were then beginning to be of especial importance. (For later developments in this line see chapter vii, section 2.) We need more studies of the types of political organizations that have flourished in the United States and of the codes of loyalties they have developed to sustain them. Such studies would concern themselves with at least five major variants: not only the immigrant machines and the reform movements, but the durable reform machines, the native interest-politics machines of the mid-nineteenth century, and the modes of government developed by the interlocking local elites of the middle and late eighteenth century.

tion. Grievances had to be given specific objects, and these the muckraker supplied. It was muckraking that brought the diffuse malaise of the public into focus.

The practice of exposure itself was not an invention of the muckraking era, nor did muckraking succeed because it had a new idea to offer. The pervasiveness of graft, the presence of a continuous corrupt connection between business and government, the link between government and vice—there was nothing new in the awareness of these things. Since the 1870's, exposure had been a recurrent theme in American political life. There had been frequent local newspaper crusades. Henry Adams and his brother Charles Francis had muckraked the Erie ring and the "Gold Conspiracy"; the *New York Times*, *Harper's Weekly*, and Thomas Nast had gone after Tammany in the seventies. There had been a great deal of exposure in the nineties, when Parkhurst and the Lexow Committee were active in New York, and W. T. Stead's *If Christ Came to Chicago* had caused a sensation in that city. Henry Demarest Lloyd's *Wealth against Common-wealth*, published in 1894, was a brilliant piece of muckraking. Hamlin Garland's Populist novel, *A Spoil of Office*, showed how general was the familiarity with state corruption. Indeed, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century, literally dozens upon dozens of novels were published which have been designated, because of their concentration upon corruption, "premuckraking" novels.⁶

What was new in muckraking in the Progressive era was neither its ideas nor its existence, but its reach—its nationwide character and its capacity to draw nationwide attention, the presence of mass muckraking media with national circulations, and huge resources for the research that went into exposure. The muckraking magazines had circulations running into the hundreds of thousands. They were able to pour funds into the investigations of their

⁶ John Lydenberg: *Premuckraking*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1946.

HOFSTADTER, RICHARD, THE AGE OF REFORM.
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reporters—S. S. McClure estimated that the famous articles of Ida Tarbell cost \$4,000 each and those of Lincoln Steffens \$2,000⁷—and they were able, as very few of the practitioners of exposure had been able before, not merely to name the malpractices in American business and politics, but to name the *malpractitioners* and their specific misdeeds, and to proclaim the facts to the entire country. It now became possible for any literate citizen to know what barkeepers, district attorneys, ward heelers, prostitutes, police-court magistrates, reporters, and corporation lawyers had always come to know in the course of their business.

Behind muckraking there was a long history of change in journalism, the story of a transformation in the newspaper and magazine world. The immensely rapid urbanization of the country had greatly enlarged daily newspaper circulation. In 1870 there were 574 daily newspapers in the country; by 1899 there were 1,610; by 1909, 2,600.⁸ The circulation of daily newspapers increased over the same span of time from 2,800,000 to 24,200,000.⁹ This expansion had opened up to publishers remarkable promotional opportunities, which brought in their train a number of changes in journalistic practice.

The newspaper owners and editors soon began to assume a new role. Experienced in the traditional function of reporting the news, they found themselves undertaking the more ambitious task of creating a mental world for the uprooted farmers and villagers who were coming to live in the city. The rural migrants found themselves in a new urban world, strange, anonymous, impersonal, cruel, often corrupt and vicious, but also full of variety and fascination. They were accustomed to a life based on primary human contacts—the family, the church, the neighborhood—and they had been torn away from these and thrust

⁷ S. S. McClure: *My Autobiography* (New York, 1914), p. 245.

⁸ Alfred McClung Lee: *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York, 1937), pp. 716–17.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 725–6.

into a more impersonal environment, in which they experienced a much larger number of more superficial human relationships. The newspaper became not only the interpreter of this environment but a means of surmounting in some measure its vast human distances, of supplying a sense of intimacy all too rare in the ordinary course of its life. Through newspaper gossip it provided a substitute for village gossip. It began to make increased use of the variety and excitement of the city to capture personal interest and offer its readers indirect human contacts.¹ The rural mind, confronted with the city, often responded with shock, and this too the newspaper did not hesitate to exploit. So one finds during the seventies, eighties, and nineties an increasing disposition on the part of editors to use the human-interest story, the crusade, the interview, and the stunt or promotional device to boom circulation. The large newspaper with a growing circulation became less dependent upon the political party. There were more politically independent or quasi-independent papers, and publishers felt more inclined to challenge the political parties and other institutions. In business terms the benefits to booming circulation of crusades and exposés far outstripped the dangers from possible retaliation. In an age when news was at a premium and when more and more copy was needed to surround the growing columns of advertisement, there was a tendency for publishers and editors to be dissatisfied with reporting the news and to attempt to make it. The papers made news in a double sense; they *created* reportable events, whether by sending Nelly Bly around the world or by helping to stir up a war with Spain. They also *elevated* events, hitherto considered beneath reportorial attention, to the level of news occurrences by clever, emotionally colored reporting. They exploited human interest, in short. This was something that had existed almost from the beginning of the popular penny press—one remembers, for instance, the elder James

¹ See Helen MacGill Hughes: *News and the Human Interest Story* (Chicago, 1940).

Gordon Bennett's capacity to exploit his own flamboyant personality. But the new exploitation of human interest was different. There was more of it, of course, and it was more skillfully done, but, most symptomatic, there was a change in its character. Where the old human interest had played up the curious concern of the common citizen with the affairs and antics of the rich, the new human interest exploited far more intensely the concern of comfortable people with the affairs of the poor. The slum sketch, the story of the poor and disinherited of the cities, became commonplace.² And it was just this interest of the secure world in the nether world that served as the prototype of muckraking.

All this concern with news, interviews, exposure, and human interest set a premium on the good reporter and reduced the importance of editorial writing and the editorial page. As early as 1871 a writer on journalism observed: "For the majority of readers it is the reporter, not the editor, who is the ruling genius of the newspaper."³ The old editors of the pre-Civil War era had put a great deal of stock in themselves as makers of opinion through their editorial columns. Now their successors began to realize that their influence on the public mind, such as it was, came from their treatment of the news, not from editorial writing. But getting the news, especially when it came to exposés and human-interest stories, was the reporter's business. Bold reportorial initiative, good reportorial writing, were now very much in demand. In the

² The modern newspaper reader often shrinks from the vulgarity and sentimentality of sob-sister journalism. While the manifest function of such writing, however, may be to exploit sentiment for the sake of sales, its latent function is to help create an urban ethos of solidarity and to put some limits on the barbarization of urban life. No American newspaper-reader can fail to notice the widespread generous response that is given almost every day to some widely publicized personal disaster. Even a dignified newspaper like the *New York Times* taps this generosity each year by raising funds for charity on the basis of poignantly written accounts of the city's "Hundred Neediest Cases." A civilization that needs sob-sister journalism is a sad one, but the same civilization incapable of producing it would be worse.

³ Frank Luther Mott: *American Journalism* (New York, 1947), p. 385.

period from 1870 to about 1890 the salaries of reporters doubled. Better-educated men were more attracted to the profession and were more acceptable in it.⁴ Editors who had scorned college graduates began to look for them. The Spanish-American War, a triumph of the new journalism, was nowhere fought more brilliantly than in the columns of the newspapers, and it was covered by a battery of reporters numerous enough and well enough equipped to be used in emergency as military reinforcements. As the reporter's job rose in status, even in glamour, more and more young men with serious literary aspirations were attracted to it as a provisional way of earning a living. These men brought to the journalistic life some of the ideals, the larger interests, and the sense of public responsibility of men of culture.

Finally, the occupational situation of the reporter was uniquely illuminating. It was not merely that reporters saw and heard things, got the inside story; they sat at the crossroads between the coarse realities of their reportorial beats and the high abstractions and elevated moral tone of the editorial page. Reporters saw what fine things the newspapers said about public responsibility, and they also saw the gross things newspaper managers did to get news or advertising. As Theodore Dreiser, then a young reporter, recalled, they became alert to hypocrisy, perhaps a little cynical themselves, but fundamentally enlightened about the immense gaps between the lofty ideals and public professions of the editorial page and the dirty realities of the business office and the newsroom.⁵ And it was

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 488-90.

⁵ "While the editorial office might be preparing the most flowery moralistic or religionistic editorials regarding the worth of man, the value of progress, character, religion, morality, the sanctity of the home, charity, and the like, the business office and news room were concerned with no such fine theories. The business office was all business, with little or no thought of anything save success, and in the city news room the mask was off and life was handled in a rough-and-ready manner, without gloves. . . . Pretense did not go here. Inmate honesty on the part of any one was not probable. Charity was a business with something in it for somebody. Morality was in the main for public consumption only." Theodore Dreiser: *A Book about My-*

into this gap that the muckraking mind rushed with all its fact-finding zeal.

It was, of course, the popular magazine, not the daily newspaper, that stood in the forefront of muckraking, but the muckraking periodicals were profoundly affected by newspaper journalism. The old, respectable magazines, the *Atlantic*, *Harper's*, the *Century*, and *Scribner's*, had been genteel, sedate enterprises selling at thirty-five cents a copy and reaching limited audiences of about 130,000. These periodicals were run by literary men; implicit in their contents was the notion that the magazine is a book in periodical form; they were managed by the conservative publishing houses. The new magazines that emerged at the turn of the century sold at ten or twelve or fifteen cents a copy and reached audiences of from 400,000 to 1,000,000. Their publishers were not literary men but business promoters; their editors were usually former newspaper editors, and they ran a good deal of news copy written by reporters. These magazines, by contrast, were newspapers in periodical form; they took many of their ideas from daily journalism or the Sunday supplements. They contained not only literature but features that resembled news. And like the daily press they soon began to make news and to become a political force in their own right.

As businessmen, the publishers of these magazines, Frank Munsey, S. S. McClure, John Brisben Walker, and others, resembled their promotion-minded forerunners in daily journalism like E. W. Scripps, Joseph Pulitzer, and William Randolph Hearst. Muckraking for them was the most successful of the circulation-building devices they used. Neither the muckraking publishers and editors nor the muckraking reporters set out to expose evils or to reform society. Although the experience of the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Munsey's*, and the *Saturday Evening Post* showed that immense circulations could be achieved with-

self (New York, 1922), pp. 151-2. Thus the newspaper itself provided a model for the Progressive dissociation of morals and "reality."

out ever entering in any serious sense upon it, muckraking was a by-product, perhaps an inevitable one, of the development of mass magazines. Even *McClure's*, the magazine that touched off the movement, had already built a large circulation upon an enterprising use of popular fiction and upon Ida Tarbell's series on the lives of Napoleon and Lincoln. The so-called "muckraking" magazines themselves devoted only a small proportion of their total space to muckraking articles. Only after exposure had proved its popularity did other magazines, notably *Hampton's*, boom their circulations by focusing on muckraking.

A significant illustration of the accidental sources of muckraking was Miss Tarbell's famous series on Standard Oil. S. S. McClure was running, during the late 1890's, a series of articles which he describes in his autobiography as dedicated to "the greatest American business achievements." He had observed that the "feeling of the common people [about the trusts] had a sort of menace in it; they took a threatening attitude toward the Trusts, and without much knowledge."⁶ He and his editors decided that a study of Standard Oil, the greatest of the trusts, would have some educational value, and they called in Ida Tarbell, who "had lived for years in the heart of the oil region of Pennsylvania, and had seen the marvelous development of the Standard Oil Trust at first hand."⁷ It happened also that Miss Tarbell, whose family had suffered the common disastrous fate of the independent oil-producers, had a great feeling for them.⁸ The methods that had been used by Standard Oil were altogether too vulnerable to be played down, and although she hoped her inquiry "might be received as a legitimate historical study . . . to my chagrin I found myself included in a new school, that of the muckrakers." She decided that she would have done with the whole business and seems to have resented the demand of some of her following that

⁶ S. S. McClure, op. cit., pp. 237-8.

⁷ Ibid., p. 238.

⁸ Ida Tarbell: *All in the Day's Work* (New York, 1939), pp. 202 ff.

she go on with the work of exposure—"I soon found that most of them wanted attacks. They had little interest in balanced findings."⁹ Later she did some further work in exposing tariff politics, but she afterwards recalled: "My conscience began to trouble me. Was it not as much my business as a reporter to present this [the favorable] side of the picture as to present the other?" "The public was coming to believe," she felt, as a result of all the work of exposure, "that the inevitable result of corporate industrial management was exploitation, neglect, bullying, crushing of labor, that the only hope was in destroying the system." So she began to write about achievements and improvements in business—under the considerable handicap, to be sure, of her muckraking reputation—became a eulogist of business, and eventually wrote an apologetic biography of the industrialist Judge Gary.¹ In her case the impulse that had been expressed by McClure when he first set out to publicize business achievements came full circle.

Most of the other outstanding figures of the muckrake era were simply writers or reporters working on commission and eager to do well what was asked of them. A few, among them Upton Sinclair and Gustavus Myers, were animated by a deep-going dislike of the capitalist order, but most of them were hired into muckraking or directed toward it on the initiative of sales-conscious editors or publishers. Probably the most socially minded and inquisitive of the muckrakers, except for the Socialists, was Lincoln Steffens; but even his muckraking of American cities began more or less accidentally when McClure refused to allow him to take over an editorship without getting out and familiarizing himself with the country.² Others were reluctant dragons. Ray Stannard Baker, whose chief desire was to be a novelist, came to McClure's as a writer of

⁹ Ibid., p. 242.

¹ Ibid., chapter xiv, pp. 364 ff.

² Lincoln Steffens: Autobiography, p. 364.

secret-service stories and of a book celebrating America's prosperity. Before he began muckraking he was writing faintly eulogistic articles on big business and the trusts. It is perhaps a significant token of the way in which memory rearranges facts in the light of myth that many years later, when Louis Filler was writing his study of the muckrakers, Baker could—no doubt sincerely—refer him to these pieces as examples of early muckraking articles. In fact Baker's first muckraking work tended in a far different direction—it showed up abuses in labor-unionism. Thomas Lawson, the author of the popular *Frenzied Finance*, was a bruised speculator with a bitter contempt for popular democracy.³ David Graham Phillips, who wrote *The Treason of the Senate*, was making large sums writing novels for the *Saturday Evening Post* when Bailey Millard, the editor of the *Cosmopolitan*, talked him into writing the attack on the Senate. Phillips was extremely reluctant at first, insisting that someone else be engaged to "gather the facts," and agreed to undertake the work only when Gustavus Myers, the Socialist writer, was hired to do the research. Once engaged upon the task, however, he developed a real interest in it.

If, from the standpoint of the editors and journalists themselves, the beginning of muckraking seemed to be more or less "accidental," its ending did not. The large magazine built on muckraking was vulnerable as a business organization. The publishing firm was so large an enterprise and sold its product for so little that it became intensely dependent upon advertising and credit, and hence vulnerable to pressure from the business community. Advertisers did not hesitate to withdraw orders for space when their own interests or related interests were touched upon. Bankers adopted a discriminatory credit policy, so that modest loans could not be secured even for the maintenance of a business of great value and proved stability. In one case, that of *Hampton's*, even espionage

³ C. C. Fegier: *The Era of the Muckrakers* (Chapel Hill, 1932), p. 130.

was employed to destroy the magazine.⁴ One magazine, *Pearson's*, continued to muckrake after 1912, when all the others had fallen into new hands or changed their policies, and its vitality, sustained down to the time of the first World War, has been cited as evidence that muckraking sentiment did not die a spontaneous death, but was choked off at its sources by those who were most affected by its exposures.⁵ This is a suggestive, but to my mind not a conclusive, point. It is conceivable that there may have been enough muckraking sentiment left to support one well-run periodical with a large circulation, but not a half-dozen plus a large number of smaller imitators. Certainly business was hostile and made its hostility felt, but it also seems that the muckraking mood was tapering off. By 1912 it had been raging at a high pitch for nine years. To imagine that it could have gone on indefinitely is to mistake its character.

Consider who the muckrakers were, what their intentions were, and what it was they were doing. Their criticisms of American society were, in their utmost reaches, very searching and radical, but they were themselves moderate men who intended to propose no radical remedies. From the beginning, then, they were limited by the disparity between the boldness of their means and the tameness of their ends. They were working at a time of widespread prosperity, and their chief appeal was not to desperate social needs but to mass sentiments of responsibility, indignation, and guilt. Hardly anyone intended that these sentiments should result in action drastic enough to trans-

⁴ For accounts of the decline of muckraking, see Louis Filler: *Crusaders for American Liberalism* (New York, 1939), chapter xxviii, and C. C. Regier, op. cit., chapter xii.

⁵ Filler, op. cit., pp. 370-3. The whole subject of the decline of muckraking deserves a full-length study of its own, centering not simply on the resistance of the business community but on such factors as popular mood and the internal business and promotional methods of the magazines themselves. In the latter connection see Walter A. Gaw: *Some Important Trends in the Development of Magazines in the United States as an Advertising Medium*, unpublished doctoral dissertation, New York University, 1942.

form American society. In truth, that society was getting along reasonably well, and the muckrakers themselves were quite aware of it. The group of leading muckrakers that left *McClure's* in 1906 to form the *American Magazine*,⁶ as Ray Stannard Baker recalled, was "far more eager to understand and make sure than to dream of utopias. . . . We 'muckraked' not because we hated our world but because we loved it. We were not hopeless, we were not cynical, we were not bitter."⁷ Their first announcement promised "the most stirring and delightful monthly book of fiction, humor, sentiment, and joyous reading that is anywhere published. It will reflect a happy, struggling, fighting world, in which, as we believe, good people are coming out on top. . . . Our magazine will be wholesome, hopeful, stimulating, uplifting. . . ."⁸

Finally, it is perhaps necessary to point out that within the limited framework of the reforms that were possible without structural alterations in the American social and economic system, the muckrakers did accomplish something in the form of legislative changes and social face-washing. They enjoyed, after all, some sense of real achievement. Presumably the temper of the early writers for *McClure's* was far more akin to that of the majority of their middle-class audience than was the attitude of

⁶ Most of the principals have left this incident obscure in their memoirs. The most informative account is that of Ida Tarbell, op. cit., pp. 256-7; cf. Steffens: *Autobiography*, pp. 535-6.

⁷ Ray Stannard Baker: *American Chronicle* (New York, 1945), p. 226.

⁸ Ibid., pp. 226-7. Cf. Miss Tarbell's recollection that the *American Magazine* "had little genuine muckraking spirit. . . . The idea that there was something fundamentally sound and good in industrial relations, that in many spots had gone far beyond what either labor or reformers were demanding, came to the office as a new attack on the old problem." Op. cit., p. 281. "It seems to me," wrote William Allen White, another member of the group, to editor John S. Phillips in 1906, "the great danger before you is that of being too purposeful. People will expect the pale drawn face; the set lips and a general line of emotional insanity. You should fool 'em. Give 'em something like 'Pigs is Pigs.' From the prospectus they will judge that you are going to produce a 'Thin red line of heroes,' and instead of which you should have the sharp claque of the slap stick. . . ." Walter Johnson: *William Allen White's America* (New York, 1947), p. 159.

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Modern History Sourcebook: The Declaration of Sentiments, Seneca Falls Conference, 1848

Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott, two American activists in the movement to abolish slavery called together the first conference to address Women's rights and issues in Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848. Part of the reason for doing so had been that Mott had been refused permission to speak at the world anti-slavery convention in London, even though she had been an official delegate. Applying the analysis of human freedom developed in the Abolitionist movement, Stanton and others began the public career of modern feminist analysis

The Declaration of Sentiments

When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one portion of the family of man to assume among the people of the earth a position different from that which they have hitherto occupied, but one to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes that impel them to such a course.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. Whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of those who suffer from it to refuse allegiance to it, and to insist upon the institution of a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their duty to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of the women under this government, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to demand the equal station to which they are entitled. The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations

on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has never permitted her to exercise her inalienable right to the elective franchise.

He has compelled her to submit to laws, in the formation of which she had no voice.

He has withheld from her rights which are given to the most ignorant and degraded men--both natives and foreigners.

Having deprived her of this first right of a citizen, the elective franchise, thereby leaving her without representation in the halls of legislation, he has oppressed her on all sides.

He has made her, if married, in the eye of the law, civilly dead.

He has taken from her all right in property, even to the wages she earns.

He has made her, morally, an irresponsible being, as she can commit many crimes with impunity, provided they be done in the presence of her husband. In the covenant of marriage, she is compelled to promise obedience to her husband, he becoming, to all intents and purposes, her master--the law giving him power to deprive her of her liberty, and to administer chastisement.

He has so framed the laws of divorce, as to what shall be the proper causes, and in case of separation, to whom the guardianship of the children shall be given, as to be wholly regardless of the happiness of women--the law, in all cases, going upon a false supposition of the supremacy of man, and giving all power into his hands.

After depriving her of all rights as a married woman, if single, and the owner of property, he has taxed her to support a government which recognizes her only when her property can be made profitable to it.

He has monopolized nearly all the profitable employments, and from those she is permitted to follow, she receives but a scanty remuneration. He closes against her all the avenues to wealth and distinction which he considers most honorable to himself. As a teacher of theology, medicine, or law, she is not known.

He has denied her the facilities for obtaining a thorough education, all colleges being closed against her.

He allows her in church, as well as state, but a subordinate position, claiming apostolic authority for her exclusion from the ministry, and, with some exceptions, from any public participation in the affairs of the church.

He has created a false public sentiment by giving to the world a different code of morals for men and women, by which moral delinquencies which exclude women from society, are not only tolerated, but deemed of little account in man.

He has usurped the prerogative of Jehovah himself, claiming it as his right to assign for her a sphere of action, when that belongs to her conscience and to her God.

He has endeavored, in every way that he could, to destroy her confidence in her own powers, to lessen her self-respect, and to make her willing to lead a dependent and abject life.

Now, in view of this entire disfranchisement of one-half the people of this country, their social and religious degradation--in view of the unjust laws above mentioned, and because women do feel themselves aggrieved, oppressed, and fraudulently deprived of their most sacred rights, we insist that they have immediate admission to all the rights and privileges which belong to them as citizens of the United States.

from Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *A History of Woman Suffrage*, vol. 1 (Rochester, N.Y.: Fowler and Wells, 1889), pages 70-71.

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CHAPTER
17

Section 5

GEOGRAPHY APPLICATION: REGION

The Movement Toward Woman Suffrage

Directions: Read the paragraphs below and study the map carefully. Then answer the questions that follow.

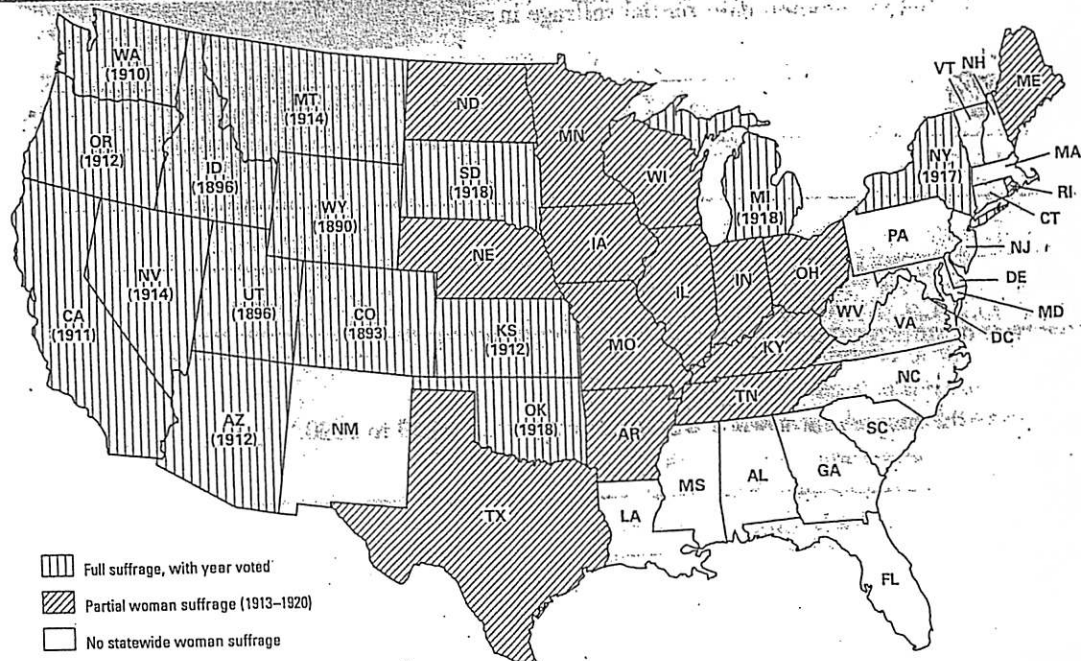
In the late 1800s, new amendments to the U.S. Constitution that guaranteed voting rights still continued to exclude women. Therefore, suffragists concentrated on the regional level—seeking the passage of state constitutional amendments insuring women the right to vote. It was felt that this strategy could eventually force a federal amendment, and in a six-year period, four states granted women full voting rights.

However, the campaign then stalled. For 13 years, until 1910, no other state passed an amendment for woman suffrage. So a new tactic was tried: gaining partial voting rights. The U.S. Constitution allows state legislatures to set qualifications for voting for presidential electors, without sending the question to voters as an attempt for an amendment requires. Thus, women pressed states for the right to vote for president through legislative action.

In Illinois, where Progressives controlled the state legislature, the plan worked. This state, in 1913, became the first to grant women partial suffrage. Grace Wilbur Trout wrote of its impact:

Illinois was the first state east of the Mississippi and the first state even bordering the great father of waters, to break down the conservatism of the great Middle West and give suffrage to its women. . . . New York women never could have won their great suffrage victory in 1917 if Illinois had not first opened the door in 1913, and the winning of suffrage in New York so added to the political strength of the suffrage movement in Congress that it made possible the passage of the federal suffrage amendment in 1919.

Woman Suffrage Before Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment, 1920



Date:

US32
Berenson

Progressive Era: Varying Thoughts on Race Relations

By 1900, the Tuskegee Institute, headed by Booker T. Washington, had been operating for almost 20 years. Five years later, W.E.B. Du Bois would found the Niagara Movement. The two men had differing points of view and different agendas for African Americans.

Directions: Study each document carefully and answer the question about it

Document 1

Brickmaking has now become such an important industry at [Tuskegee Institute] that last season our students manufactured twelve hundred thousand of first-class bricks. . . . Aside from this, scores of young men have mastered the brickmaking trade . . . and are now engaged in this industry in many parts of the South.

The making of these bricks taught me an important lesson in regard to the relations of the two races in the South. Many white people who had had no contact with the school . . . came to us to buy bricks because they found out that ours were good bricks. They discovered that we were supplying a real want in the community. The making of these bricks caused many of the white residents of the neighbourhood to begin to feel that . . . in educating our students we were adding something to the wealth and comfort of the community. As the people of the neighbourhood came to us to buy bricks, we got acquainted with them; . . . Our business interests became intermingled, . . . This, in a large measure, helped to lay the foundation for the pleasant relations that have continued to exist between us and the white people in that section, and which now extend throughout the South.

—from *Up from Slavery* by Booker T. Washington

From this excerpt, what inference can you draw about Washington's approach to race relations? On what is your inference based?

Document 2

Mr. Washington represents in Negro thought the old attitude of adjustment and submission. . . . [He] distinctly asks that black people give up, at least for the present, three things,—

First, political power,

Second, insistence on civil rights,

Third, higher education of Negro youth,—

and concentrate all their energies on industrial education, the accumulation of wealth, and the conciliation of the South. This policy has been courageously and insistently advocated for over fifteen years. . . . In these years there have occurred:

1. The disfranchisement of the Negro.
2. The legal creation of a distinct status of civil inferiority for the Negro.
3. The steady withdrawal of aid from institutions for the higher training of the Negro.

These movements are not, to be sure, direct results of Mr. Washington's teachings; but his propaganda has . . . helped their speedier accomplishment. The question then comes: Is it possible, and probable, that nine millions of men can make effective progress in economic lines if they are deprived of political rights, made a servile caste, and allowed only the most meagre chance for developing their exceptional men?

—from *The Souls of Black Folk* by W. E. B. Du Bois

In Du Bois opinion, what are some negative effects of Booker T. Washington's popular teachings?

Document 3

Nothing has been more remarkable in the recent history of the Negro than Washington's rise to influence as a leader, and the spread of his ideals of education and progress. . . . The central idea of his doctrine, indeed, is work. He teaches that if the Negro wins by real worth a strong economic position in the country, other rights and privileges will come to him naturally. He should get his rights, not by gift of the white man, but by earning them himself.

Wherever I found a prosperous Negro enterprise, a thriving business place, a good home, there I was almost sure to find Booker T. Washington's picture over the fireplace or a little framed motto expressing his gospel of work and service. . . . Many highly educated Negroes, especially, in the North, dislike him and oppose him, but he has brought new hope and given new courage to the masses of his race. He has given them a working plan of life. And is there a higher test of usefulness? Measured by any standard, white or black, Washington must be regarded to-day as one of the great men of this country; and in the future he will be so honoured.

—editorial by Ray Stannard Baker from *American Magazine*, 1908

According to this writer, who admires Booker T. Washington and who opposes him? Why, in the writer's opinion, is Washington deserving of admiration?

What is the basic disagreement between Washington and Du Bois? Whose approach for the advancement of African Americans do you think had more merit at the time and why?

Booker T. and W.E.B.
by Dudley Randall

*Circle the best argument
of DuBois and
Washington (each) pointed
out in this poem*

"It seems to me," said Booker T.,
"It shows a mighty lot of cheek
To Study chemistry and Greek
When Mister Charlie needs a hand
To hoe the cotton on his land,
And when Miss Ann looks for a cook,
Why stick your nose inside a book?"

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.,
"If I should have the drive to seek
Knowledge of chemistry or Greek,
I'll do it. Charles and Miss can look
Another place for hand or cook,
Some men rejoice in skill of hand,
And some in cultivating land,
But there are others who maintain
The right to cultivate the brain."

"It seems to me," said Booker T.,
"That all you folks have missed the boat
Who shout about the right to vote,
And spend vain days and sleepless nights
In uproar over civil rights.
Just keep your mouths shut, do not grouse,
But work, and save, and buy a house."

"I don't agree," said W.E.B.,
"For what can property avail
If dignity and justice fail.
Unless you help to make the laws,
They'll steal your house with trumped-up clause
A rope's as tight, a fire as hot,
No matter how much cash you've got.
Speak soft, and try your little plan,
But as for me, I'll be a man."

"It seems to me," said Booker T.—
"I don't agree," Said W.B.B.

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Document 1

One of the points in which I was especially interested was the Jim Crow regulations, that is, the system of separation of the races in street cars and railroad trains.

I was curious to see how the system worked out in Atlanta. Over the door of each car, I found the sign: "White people will seat from front of car toward the back and colored people from toward front". Sure enough, I found the white people in front and the Negroes behind.

As the sign indicates, there is no definite line of division between the white seats and the black seats, as in many other Southern cities. This very absence of a clear demarcation is significant of many relationships in the South. The color line is drawn, but neither race knows just where it is. Indeed, it can hardly be definitely drawn in many relationships, because it is constantly changing. This uncertainty is a fertile source of friction and bitterness.

The very first time I was on a car in Atlanta, I saw the conductor - all conductors are white - ask a Negro woman to get up and take a seat farther back in order to make a place for a white man. I have also seen white men requested to leave the Negro section of the car.

"We pay first-class fare," said one of the leading Negroes in Atlanta, "exactly as the white man does, but we don't get first-class service. I say it isn't fair."

Charles T. Hopkins, a leader in the Civic League and one of the prominent lawyers of the city, told me that he believed the Negroes should be given their definite seats in every car; he said that he personally made it a practice to stand up rather than to take any one of the four back seats, which he considered as belonging to the Negroes....

A few years ago no hotel or restaurant in Boston refused Negro guests; now several hotels, restaurants, and especially confectionary stores, will not serve Negroes, even the best of them. The discrimination is not made openly, but a Negro who goes to such places is informed that there are no accommodations, or he is overlooked and otherwise slighted, so that he does not come again. A strong prejudice exists against renting flats and houses in many white neighborhoods to colored people. The Negro in Boston, as in other cities, is building up "quarters," which he occupies to the increasing exclusion of other classes of people.

SOURCE: Ray Stannard Baker, "following the Color Line", *American Magazine*, 1908.

Document 2

In detail our demands are clear and unequivocal. First, we would vote, with the right to vote goes everything: Freedom, manhood, the honor of your wives, the chastity of your daughters, the right to work,

and the chance to rise, and let no man listen to those who deny this.

We want full manhood suffrage, and we want it now, henceforth and forever.

Second. We want discrimination in public accommodation to cease. Separation in railway and street cars, based simply on race and color, is un-American, un-democratic, and silly. We protest against all such discrimination.

Third. We claim the right of freedmen to walk, talk, and be with them that wish to be with us. No man has a right to choose another man's friends, and to attempt to do so is an impudent interference with the most fundamental human privilege.

Fourth. We want the laws enforced against rich as well as poor; against Capitalists as well as Laborer; against white as well as black. We are not more lawless than the white race, we are more often arrested, convicted, and mobbed. We want justice even for criminals and outlaws. We want the Constitution of the country enforced. We want Congress to take charge of Congressional elections. We want the Fourteenth amendment carried out to the letter and every State disenfranchised in Congress which attempts to disfranchise its rightful voters. We want the Fifteenth amendment enforced and no State allowed to base its franchise simply on color.

The failure of the Republican Party in Congress at the session just closed to redeem its pledge of 1904 with reference to suffrage conditions at the South seems a plain, deliberate, and premeditated breach of promise, and stamps that party as guilty of obtaining votes under false pretense.

Fifth. We want our children educated. The school system in the country districts of the South is a disgrace and in few towns and cities are the Negro schools what they ought to be. We want the national government to step in and wipe out illiteracy in the South. Either the United States will destroy ignorance or ignorance will destroy the United States.

And when we call for education we mean real education. We believe in work. We ourselves are workers, but work is not necessarily education. Education is the development of power and ideal. We want our children trained as intelligent human beings should be, and we will fight for all time against any proposal to educate black boys and girls simply as servants and underlings, or simply for the use of other people. They have a right to know, to think, to aspire.

These are some of the chief things which we want. How shall we get them? By voting where we may vote, by persistent, unceasing agitation; by hammering at the truth, by sacrifice and work.

We do not believe in violence, neither in the despised violence of the raid nor the lauded violence of the soldier, nor the barbarous violence of the mob, but we do believe in John Brown, in that incarnate spirit of justice, that hatred of a lie, that willingness to sacrifice money, reputation, and life itself on the altar of right. And here on the scene of John Brown's martyrdom we reconsecrate ourselves, our honor, our property to the final emancipation of the race which John Brown died to make free.

SOURCE: The Niagara Movement's Address to the Country by W.E.B. Du Bois, August 20, 1906.

Document 3

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is said that the strongest chain is no stronger than its weakest link. In the Southern part of our country there are twenty-two millions of your brethren who are bound to you by ties which you cannot tear asunder if you would. The most intelligent man in your community has his intelligence darkened by the ignorance of a fellow citizen in the Mississippi bottoms. The most wealthy in your city would be more wealthy but for the poverty of a fellow being in the Carolina rice swamps. The most moral and religious among you has his religion and morality modified by the degradation of the man in the South whose religion is a mere matter of form or emotionalism.

The vote in your state that is cast for the highest and purest form of government is largely neutralized by the vote of the man in Louisiana whose ballot is stolen or cast in ignorance. When the South is poor, you are poor; when the South commits crime, you commit crime. My friends, there is no mistake; you must help us to raise the character of our civilization or yours will be lowered....

Can you make your intelligence affect us in the same ratio that our ignorance affects you? Let us put a not improbable case, one that involves peace or war, the honor or dishonor of our nation—yea, the very existence of the government. The North and West are divided. There are five million votes to be cast in the South, and of this number one half are ignorant. Not only are one half the voters ignorant, but, because of this ignorant vote, corruption, dishonesty in a dozen forms have crept into the exercise of the political franchise.... The time may not be far off when to this kind of jury we shall have to look for the verdict that is to decide the course of our democratic institutions.

When a great national calamity stares us in the face, we are, I fear, too much given to depending on a short campaign of education to do on the hustings what should have been accomplished in the schoolroom. With this preliminary survey, let us examine with more care the work to be done in the South before all classes will be fit for the highest duties of citizenship.

In reference to my own race I am confronted with some embarrassment at the outset because of the various and conflicting opinions as to what is to be its final place in our economic and political life. Within the last thirty years—and, I might add, within the last three months—it has been proven by eminent authority that the Negro is increasing in numbers so fast that it is only a question of a few years before he will far outnumber the white race in the South, and it has also been proven that the Negro is fast dying out and it is only a question of a few years before he will have completely disappeared. It has also been proven that crime among us is on the increase and that crime is on the decrease; that education helps the Negro, that education also hurts him; that he is fast leaving the South and taking up his residence in the North and West, and that the tendency of the Negro is to drift to the lowlands of the Mississippi bottoms. It has been proven that as a slave laborer he produced less cotton than a free man. It has been proven that education unfits the Negro for work....

In the midst of this confusion there are a few things of which I feel certain that furnish a basis for thought and action. I know ... that, whether in slavery or freedom, we have always been loyal to the Stars and Stripes, that no schoolhouse has been opened for us that has not been filled; that 1,500,000 ballots that we have the right to cast are as potent for weal and woe as the ballot cast by the whitest and most influential man in your commonwealth....

I fear that the wisest and most interested have not fully comprehended the task which American slavery has laid at the doors of the Republic. Few, I fear, realize what is to be done before the seven million of my people in the South can be made a safe, helpful, progressive part of our institutions. The South, in proportion to its ability, has done well, but this does not change facts. Let me illustrate what I mean by a single example. In spite of all that has been done, I was in a county in Alabama a few days ago where there are some thirty thousand colored people and about seven thousand whites; in this county not a single public school for Negroes has been open this year longer than three months, not a single colored

teacher has been paid more than fifteen dollars a month for his teaching. Not one of these schools was taught in a building worthy of the name of schoolhouse. In this county the state or public authorities do not own a dollar's worth of school property—not a schoolhouse, a blackboard, or a piece of crayon.

Each colored child had spent on him this year for his education about fifty cents, while one of your children had spent on him this year for education not far from twenty dollars. And yet each citizen of this county is expected to share the burdens and privileges of our democratic form of government just as intelligently and conscientiously as the citizens of your beloved Kings County. A vote in this county means as much to the nation as a vote in the city of Boston....

I have referred to industrial education as a means of fitting the millions of my people in the South for the duties of citizenship. Until there is industrial independence it is hardly possible to have a pure ballot. In the country districts of the Gulf states it is safe to say that not more than one black man in twenty owns the land he cultivates. Where so large a proportion of the people are dependent, live in other people's houses, eat other people's food, and wear clothes they have not paid for, it is a pretty hard thing to tell how they are going to vote.

My remarks thus far have referred mainly to my own race. But there is another side. The longer I live and the more I study the question, the more I am convinced that it is not so much a problem as to what you will do with the Negro as what the Negro will do with you and your civilization.... The educators, the statesmen, the philanthropists have never comprehended their duty toward the millions of poor whites in the South who were buffeted for two hundred years between slavery and freedom, between civilization and degradation, who were disregarded by both master and slave. It needs no prophet to tell the character of our future civilization when the poor white boy in the country districts of the South receives one dollar's worth of education and your boy twenty dollars' worth, when one never enters a library or reading room and the other has libraries and reading rooms in every ward and town. When one hears lectures and sermons once in two months and the other can hear a lecture or sermon every day in the year. When you help the South you help yourselves....

Some years ago a bright young man of my race succeeded in passing a competitive examination for a cadetship at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. Says the young man, Mr. Henry Baker, in describing his stay at this institution: "I was several times attacked with stones and was forced finally to appeal to the officers, when a marine was detailed to accompany me across the campus and from the mess hall at meal times. My books were mutilated, my clothes were cut and in some instances destroyed, and all the petty annoyances which ingenuity could devise were inflicted upon me daily, and during seamanship practice aboard the Dale attempts were often made to do me personal injury while I would be aloft in the rigging. No one ever addressed me by name. I was called the Moke usually, the Nigger for variety. I was shunned as if I were a veritable leper, and received curses and blows as the only method my persecutors had of relieving the monotony."

Not once during the two years, with one exception, did any one of the more than four hundred cadets enrolled ever come to him with a word of advice, counsel, sympathy, or information.... The one exception was in the case of a Pennsylvania boy, who stealthily brought him a piece of his birthday cake at twelve o'clock one night. The act so surprised Baker that his suspicions were aroused, but these were dispelled by the donor, who read to him a letter which he had received from his mother, from whom the cake came, in which she requested that a slice be given to the colored cadet who was without friends.

I recite this incident not for the purpose merely of condemning the wrong done a member of my race; no, no, not that. I mention the case, not for the one cadet, but for the sake of the four hundred cadets, for the sake of the four hundred American families, the four hundred American communities whose civilization and Christianity these cadets represented. Here were four hundred and more young men representing the flower of our country, who had passed through our common schools and were preparing themselves at public expense to defend the honor of our country. And yet, with grammar, reading, and arithmetic in the public schools, and with lessons in the arts of war, the principles of physical courage at Annapolis, both systems seemed to have utterly failed to prepare a single one of these young men for real life, that he could be brave enough, Christian enough, American enough, to take this poor defenseless black

boy by the hand in open daylight and let the world know that he was his friend. Education, whether of black man or white man, that gives one physical courage to stand in front of the cannon and fails to give him moral courage to stand up in defense of right and justice is a failure.

... My friends, we are one in this country. The question of the highest citizenship and the complete education of all concerns nearly ten million of my own people and over sixty million of yours. We rise as you rise; when we fall you fall. When you are strong we are strong; when we are weak you are weak. There is no power than can separate our destiny. The Negro can afford to be wronged; the white man cannot afford to wrong him....

If a white man steals a Negro's ballot it is the white man who is permanently injured. Physical death comes to the one Negro lynched in a county, but death of the morals—death of the soul—comes to the thousands responsible for the lynching.

We are a patient, humble people. We can afford to work and wait. There is plenty in this country for us to do. Away up in the atmosphere of goodness, forbearance, patience, long-suffering, and forgiveness the workers are not many or overcrowded. If others would be little we can be great. If others would be mean we can be good. If others would push us down we can help push them up. Character, not circumstances, makes the man....

During the next half-century and more my race must continue passing through the severe American crucible. We are to be tested in our patience, in our forbearance, our power to endure wrong, to withstand temptation, to succeed, to acquire and use skill, our ability to compete, to succeed in commerce; to disregard the superficial for the real, the appearance for the substance; to be great and yet the servant of all. This, this is the passport to all that is best in the life of our republic, and the Negro must possess it or be debarred. In working out our destiny, while the main burden and center of activity must be with us, we shall need in a large measure the help, the encouragement, the guidance that the strong can give the weak. Thus helped, we of both races in the South shall soon throw off the shackles of racial and sectional prejudice and rise above the clouds of ignorance, narrowness, and selfishness into that atmosphere, that pure sunshine, where it will be our highest ambition to serve man, our brother, regardless of race or past conditions.

SOURCE: Booker T. Washington, Address Before the Institute of Arts and Sciences, Brooklyn, NY, September 30, 1896.

Document 4

Dear Miss Wells:

Let me give you thanks for your faithful paper on the lynch abomination now generally practiced against colored people in the South. There has been no word equal to it in convincing power. I have spoken, but my word is feeble in comparison. You give us what you know and testify from actual knowledge. You have dealt with the facts with cool, painstaking fidelity and left those naked and un-contradicted facts to speak for themselves.

Brave woman! you have done your people and mine a service which can neither be weighed nor measured. If American conscience were only half alive, if the American church and clergy were only half

christianized, if American moral sensibility were not hardened by persistent infliction of outrage and crime against colored people, a scream of horror, shame and indignation would rise to Heaven wherever your pamphlet shall be read.

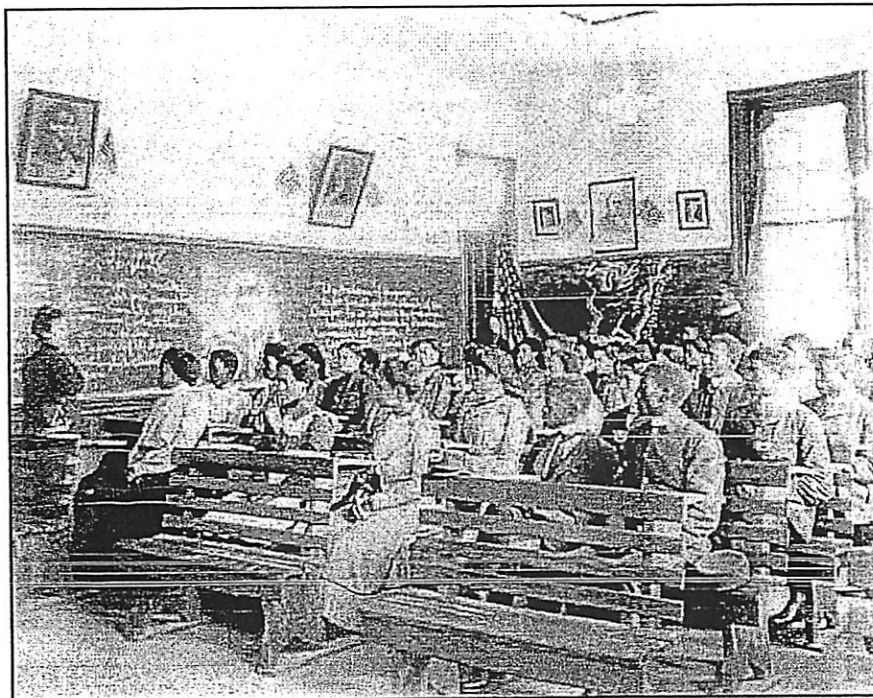
But alas! even crime has power to reproduce itself and create conditions favorable to its own existence. It sometimes seems we are deserted by earth and Heaven--yet we must still think, speak and work, and trust in the power of a merciful God for final deliverance.

Very truly and gratefully yours,
FREDERICK DOUGLASS.

Cedar Hill, Anacostia, D.C., Oct. 25, 1892.

SOURCE: Letter from Frederick Douglass to Ida B. Wells, 1892.

Document 5



SOURCE: Tuskegee Institute classroom, late 19c.

Document 6

Persons Lynched in the U. S. [by race]

<u>Year</u>	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
1882	64	49	113
1885	110	74	184
1890	11	85	96
1895	66	113	179
1900	9	106	115

SOURCE: U. S. National Archives (1882 was the first year that these statistics were gathered).

Document 7

Black Leaders Criticize Theodore Roosevelt

Negro Pastors Assail Roosevelt's Army Order One Calls Him a Judas for Dismissing Colored Troops

Threaten a Change in Votes

Deep resentment over the action of President Roosevelt in discharging without honor three companies of the colored Twenty-fifth United States Infantry was expressed yesterday by the preachers in the negro churches in the city. They protested against the arbitrary nature of the order and declared that the President never would have dared to give like treatment to white soldiers.

They saw in the selection of a Southerner to make the official investigation into the troubles at Brownsville a truckling to sectional prejudice, and they declared in so many words that the negroes of New York would seek revenge at the ballot box.

As the preachers expressed their feelings it was evident that the feelings of their congregations had been deeply touched also. They punctuated the telling points of the sermons with exclamations of approval. At Mount Olivet Baptist Church, Fifty-third Street and Seventh Avenue, the Rev. Dr. Gilbert presented resolutions condemning the President, and they were carried by the congregation rising in a body. In introducing the subject he said:

"You have often heard me speak in admiration of the President, but now we have lost confidence in him. He has yielded to the ungodly prejudice of the South and has acted as he never would have done with white people. You know colored people, and you know that those who committed the crime, which we as much as any condemn, would never have told their comrades. Yet he punishes all alike. His own son a few weeks ago refused to accuse his comrades, and no one approved more heartily than the President."

The resolutions offered recited the history of Brownsville trouble and went on:

As a church we object to the singling out of negro soldiers for a course of treatment that is unprecedented in the history of the country. We are unalterably opposed to the un-American idea of making the innocent suffer vicariously for the wrongdoing of a few guilty men, and we believe that the dismissal of all of the men of the three companies referred to is too great a concession to prejudice against our people. In view of the above-expressed sentiments be it

Resolved. That the action of the President of the United States is most heartily disapproved by us, and is so much the more disapproved by us because of the high regard we have hitherto cherished for him.

Resolved, further. That it is our conviction that the order of the President should be forthwith rescinded.

Resolved, further. That a copy of these resolutions be given to the press for publication, and that a copy be sent to the President and also one to the War Department.

In the Memorial, A. M. E. Zion Church of Brooklyn the Rev. Dr. F. M. Jacobs said:

"The President might eat with a thousand Booker T. Washington's and it would not hurt us as much as this action. The black man and woman do not want social equality; they do want justice and equity. In his ambition he has forgotten all of the bravery and self-sacrifice of the negro troops, through which alone he is alive to-day."

Further references to the rescue of the Rough Riders on San Juan Hill by the negro troops were made at the Abyssinian Baptist Church, West Fortieth Street, by the Rev. Dr. Charles S. Morris. He said:

"When the President, whose life our soldiers saved on the red slopes of San Juan Hill, whose nomination to the Governorship of New York our votes ratified at the ballot box, sends a Southerner full of the prejudice of that section to investigate a case of lawless disorder, and brands with an ineffable stain 150 men for the crime of ten or twelve, a people with a million votes, which can be cast and counted, will smite with unforgiving condemnation the next Presidential candidate of the Republican Party.

"The President's decree was signed the day after election. He shot us when our gun was empty. But we have two years to work, and our slogan shall be a Republican Congress to protect our people in the South, a Democratic President to resent the insult heaped upon us. Thus we shall answer Theodore Roosevelt, once enshrined in our love as our Moses, now enshrouded in our scorn as our Judas."

SOURCE: *The New York Times*, November 20, 1906.

Document 8

A ship lost at sea for many days suddenly sighted a friendly vessel. From the mast of the unfortunate vessel was seen a signal, "Water, water; we die of thirst!" The answer from the friendly vessel at once came back, "Cast down your bucket where you are." A second time the signal, "Water, water; send us water!" ran up from the distressed vessel, and was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." And a third and fourth signal for water was answered, "Cast down your bucket where you are." The captain of the distressed vessel, at last heeding the injunction, cast down his bucket, and it came up full of fresh, sparkling water from the mouth of the Amazon River. To those of my race who depend on bettering their condition in a foreign land or who underestimate the importance of cultivating friendly relations with the Southern white man, who is their next-door neighbor, I would say: "Cast down your bucket where you are"-cast it down in making friends in every manly way of the people of all races by whom we are surrounded.

Cast it down in agriculture, mechanics, in commerce, in domestic service, and in the professions. And in this connection it is well to bear in mind that whatever other sins the South may be called to bear, when it comes to business, pure and simple, it is in the South that the Negro is given a man's chance in the commercial world, and in nothing is this Exposition more eloquent than in emphasizing this chance. Our greatest danger is that in the great leap from slavery to freedom we may overlook the fact that the masses of us are to live by the productions of our hands, and fail to keep in mind that we shall prosper in proportion as we learn to dignify and glorify common labor, and put brains and skill into the common occupations of life; shall prosper in proportion as we learn to draw the line between the superficial and the substantial, the ornamental gewgaws of life and the useful. No race can prosper till it learns that there is as much dignity in tilling a field as in writing a poem. It is at the bottom of life we must begin, and not at the top. Nor should we permit our grievances to overshadow our opportunities.

To those of the white race who look to the incoming of those of foreign birth and strange tongue and habits for the prosperity of the South, were I permitted I would repeat what I say to my own race, "Cast down your bucket where you are." Cast it down among the eight millions of Negroes whose habits you know, whose fidelity and love you have tested in days when to have proved treacherous meant the ruin of your firesides. Cast down your bucket among these people who have, without strikes and labour wars, tilled your fields, cleared your forests, builded your railroads and cities, and brought forth treasures from the bowels of the earth, and helped make possible this magnificent representation of the progress of the South. Casting down your bucket among my people, helping and encouraging them as you are doing on these grounds, and to education of head, hand, and heart, you will find that they will buy your surplus land, make blossom the waste places in your fields, and run your factories. While doing this, you can be sure in the future, as in the past, that you and your families will be surrounded by the most patient, faithful, law-abiding, and unresentful people that the world has seen. As we have proved our loyalty to you in the past, in nursing your children, watching by the sick-bed of your mothers and fathers, and often following them with tear-dimmed eyes to their graves, so in the future, in our humble way, we shall stand by you with a devotion that no foreigner can approach, ready to lay down our lives, if need be, in defense of yours, interlacing our industrial, commercial, civil, and religious life with yours in a way that shall make the interests of both races one. In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress....

Nearly sixteen millions of hands will aid you in pulling the load upward, or they will pull against you the load downward. We shall constitute one-third and more of the ignorance and crime of the South, or one-third its intelligence and progress; we shall contribute one-third to the business and industrial prosperity of the South, or we shall prove a veritable body of death, stagnating, depressing, retarding every effort to

advance the body politic.

In conclusion, may I repeat that nothing in thirty years has given us more hope and encouragement, and drawn us so near to you of the white race, as this opportunity offered by the Exposition; and here bending, as it were, over the altar that represents the results of the struggles of your race and mine, both starting practically empty-handed three decades ago, I pledge that in your effort to work out the great and intricate problem which God has laid at the doors of the South, you shall have at all times the patient, sympathetic help of my race; only let this be constantly in mind, that, while from representations in these buildings of the product of field, of forest, of mine, of factory, letters, and art, much good will come, yet far above and beyond material benefits will be that higher good, that, let us pray God, will come, in a blotting out of sectional differences' and racial animosities and suspicions, in a determination to administer absolute justice, in a willing obedience among all classes to the mandates of law. This, coupled with our material prosperity, will bring into our beloved South a new heaven and a new earth.

SOURCE: Booker T. Washington, Atlanta Exposition Address, 1895.

Document 9

...We think the enforced separation of the races, as applied to the internal commerce of the State, neither abridges the privileges or immunities of the colored man, deprives him of his property without due process of law, nor denies him the equal protection of the laws, within the meaning of the Fourteenth Amendment.

We consider the underlying fallacy of the plaintiff's argument to consist in the assumption that the enforced separation of the two races stamps the colored race with a badge of inferiority. If this be so, it is not by reason of anything found in the act, but solely because the colored race chooses to put that construction upon it. The argument necessarily assumes that if, as has been more than once the case, and is not unlikely to be so again, the colored race should become the dominant power in the state legislature, and should enact a law in precisely similar terms, it would thereby relegate the white race to an inferior position. We imagine that the white race, at least, would not acquiesce in this assumption. The argument also assumes that social prejudices may be overcome by legislation, and that equal rights cannot be secured to the negro except by an enforced commingling of the two races. We cannot accept this proposition....Legislation is powerless to eradicate racial instincts or to abolish distinctions based upon physical differences, and the attempt to do so can only result in accentuating the difficulties of the present situation. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal one cannot be inferior to the other civilly or politically. If one race be inferior to the other socially, the Constitution of the United States cannot put them upon the same plane....

SOURCE: Majority decision—*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896.

Document 10

...we have before us a state enactment that compels, under penalties, the separation of the two races in railroad passenger coaches, and makes it a crime for a citizen of either race to enter a coach that has been assigned to citizens of the other race....

In respect of civil rights, common to all citizens, the Constitution of the United States does not, I think, permit any public authority to know the race of those entitled to be protected in the employment of such rights....

It was said in argument that the statute of Louisiana does not discriminate against either race, but prescribes a rule applicable alike to white and colored citizens. But this argument does not meet the difficulty. Every one knows that the statute in question had its origin in the purpose,...to exclude colored people from coaches occupied by or assigned to white persons....

The white race deems itself to be the dominant race in this country.

...But in view of the Constitution, in the eye of the law, there is in this country no superior, dominant, ruling class of citizens. There is no caste here. Our Constitution is color-blind, and neither knows nor tolerates classes among citizens. In respect of civil rights, all citizens are equal before the law....It is, therefore, to be regretted that this high tribunal, the final expositor of the fundamental law of the land, has reached the conclusion that it is competent for a State to regulate the enjoyment by citizens of their civil rights solely upon the basis of race.

In my opinion, the judgment this day rendered will, in time, prove to be quite as pernicious as the decision made by this tribunal in the Dred Scott case....

The arbitrary separation of citizens, on the basis of race, while they are on a public highway, is a badge of servitude wholly inconsistent with the civil freedom and the equality before the law established by the Constitution. It cannot be justified upon any legal grounds....

SOURCE: Justice Harlan dissenting--*Plessy v. Ferguson*, 1896.

Source: The legacy of William Howard Taft
Donald F. Anderson, "Presidential Studies Quarterly",
Vol. 12, No. 1. (Winter, 1982) LEGACY OF WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT | 27
pg. 26-33.

only the eight electoral votes of Utah and Vermont) he accepted a position as Kent Professor of Constitutional Law at Yale University, where he wrote his famous treatise on presidential power entitled *Our Chief Magistrate and His Powers*. But it was not until 1921 that his life-long ambition was finally realized, and he was appointed Chief Justice of the Supreme Court by Warren Harding, a position he would hold until his death in 1930.

Most men would be content to have been honored with any one of these prominent national offices. Taft is unique among our presidents for having successfully pursued a public career that led to both the presidency and the Chief Justiceship, an extraordinary combination of feats which we are unlikely to see repeated in American politics.

A number of observations can be made about Taft's career. First, the bulk of his pre-presidential career — 20 years to be exact — were associated with legal-judicial positions as opposed to top legislative or executive positions. Only eight years were spent in national administrative office before his actual nomination. Coming from such a legalistic-judicial background, it is little wonder that he became the most judicial of our presidents and, paradoxically, one of the most political of our Chief Justices.

Secondly, Taft came to the Presidency without ever having run for a major legislative or executive office, let alone run for reelection. True, his career had nevertheless involved him in national politics and issues, but it was a career that had not required the development of skills in campaigning or in manipulating public opinion, or as Taft himself would have expressed it, "playing to the gallery."¹ And as so many of our presidents and countrymen have learned to their dismay, the presidency is no place for on-the-job training.

Thirdly, the nomination of such a distinguished public servant would be virtually impossible today under our "reformed" presidential nominating procedures. The old convention system, say what you may about it, could occasionally nominate an extraordinary public ser-

vant like Taft. It remains to be seen whether this will be possible under the new selection system that has evolved, a system that seems to reward undistinguished personalities instead, at least so far. The William Howard Tafts of this world are unlikely to be nominated for the presidency again, not because of any personal deficiencies they might have, but because the personal, "presidential" qualities that attracted the attention of top party leaders are no longer counted as heavily under the popular nominating system that has emerged since 1968.

But what of the legacies of the Taft Presidency itself? Given the passage of time, they are not immediately evident. But, of course, it depends on what legacies you are referring to. There are three kinds of Taft legacies that one can focus on: 1) the actual accomplishments of the administration that have permanently affected our political landscape; 2) the political beliefs of the man that remain timeless in their appeal and significance; and 3) the selectively recorded "facts" about the administration that scholars have chosen to remember and include in our histories and texts.

What were the major accomplishments of the Taft Presidency? One has to view this administration as a transitional one which continued, however reluctantly, to move the nation in the general direction of more national regulation of growing corporate power. The Payne-Aldrich Tariff Act of 1910, of course, stands as the monument of Taft's first two years, a monument, however, that attracted as much criticism as praise, because it failed to meet popular expectations of a major decrease in rates, expectations Taft himself had fed during the 1908 campaign. Add to the Tariff Act Taft's zealous enforcement of the anti-trust laws, amendments to existing laws regulating the railroads and the food and drug industry, the 16th Amendment legalizing the income tax, and the Panama Canal Act, and you have some of the highlights of his four years. Of course, he continued the Roosevelt foreign policy of expanding American influence in the world and added a special twist by pushing commercial expansion

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through what came to be termed "Dollar Diplomacy."

However, these accomplishments are modest, indeed, in comparison to the more dramatic presidencies that have followed. We should not look to Taft's record for any enduring legacies, with the possible exception, in my estimation, of his courageous unwillingness to use military force against Mexico to quell a series of border incidents in 1911. But, as we all know, presidents who go to war always seem to attract more historical attention than those who keep the peace.

What of his conservative principles and beliefs? Here the legacies are as strong and as enduring as conservative thought itself in American history. Four areas of Taft's thought—his belief in constitutional democracy, separation of powers, political parties as essential instruments of democracy, and his warnings about the dangers of radical majoritarianism—all remain relevant intellectual legacies for our own age.

Taft believed deeply in the "rule of law" rather than the rule of men. For many today, the "rule of law" has become merely a cliché, but, for Taft, it was his religion; it was his life! Belief in its existence and its importance for civilized life was the cornerstone of his personal beliefs and public actions. He may have worshipped Law too deeply for his own public good (certainly Roosevelt and the Progressives thought so), but his public record cannot be properly understood without recognizing the critical role this belief played in guiding his public career. The "rule of law" meant, of course, constitutional democracy, always with the emphasis upon the word "constitutional" rather than the word "democracy." Democracy was only tolerable if it was restrained through appropriate constitutional devices to prevent majorities from abusing their powers.

A corollary to Taft's belief in constitutionalism was his respect for our tripartite system of government, for separation of powers and checks and balances—those ingenious inventions of our Founding Fathers designed to preserve human liberty and curtail the excesses of majority

rule. Again, one cannot understand Taft's public record unless one understands the importance of these principles in his world view. Taft is invariably associated with the so-called "constitutional" or "literalist" conception of the presidency; but he was not, in fact, an advocate of a weak presidency. He believed in a strong presidency, operating, however, in a balanced system with equally strong legislative and judicial branches. A presidency that dominated the other two branches of government permanently was not desirable in his view; in fact, it was a long term threat to our liberties.

If Taft is our only president to have spent more time worrying about the power and prestige of the judiciary than of the presidency itself (and he was!), it is not because his conception of presidential power was somehow too weak, but because he was alarmed by progressive threats to the maintenance of a strong independent judiciary, particularly the threats of judicial recall. Since the presidency was hardly in danger of being dismantled by the other two branches of government, whereas the Supreme Court was, Taft was determined to protect his favorite branch of government, even at the price of personal popularity. If the Presidency itself had been under attack, Taft, I believe, would have been equal to the challenge.

A third essential belief—one that appears increasingly at odds with the prevailing spirit of our age—was Taft's conviction that political parties were critically important to the survival of popular government. Without parties, Taft believed there could be no effective way in which the people could transform their private opinions into public policy. His whole public career is a testament to his loyalty to the Republican Party and its principles. He believed that citizens would have to subordinate their own personal views to those of the larger party organizations if they were to be effective in realizing their most important goals. In the real world, progress would be achieved not through independent action, but through party action. He publicly defended these beliefs in 1906:

As this is a party government, and as measures are controlled by party decisions, the real progress must be made along party lines; and if a man separates from his party he loses altogether any influence he may exert in determining those policies. I do not at all advocate that a man should adhere to party against high principle and conviction, but this life is all a series of compromises by which little by little, and step by step, progress toward better things is made. All the good in the world cannot be attained at one breath. We must achieve what we can at the time we can, and must let other aims and objects of the highest good abide a different opportunity for their attainment. While, therefore, we may not agree with all the principles adopted into legislation or into executive policy by a party with which we are affiliated, we should ordinarily not destroy our usefulness and power for good in influencing the party in the right direction, by withdrawing from it on issues not the most important, if, on the whole, we believe that more good can come from its success than from that of its opponent.²

Taft's ideas on parties and loyalty stand in stark contrast to the spirit of our age, an age in which party organizations have become weak reflections of their former selves, and in which the number of independents has grown by leaps and bounds. When Taft saw progressive Republicans challenging the traditional norms of party loyalty and refusing to subordinate themselves to the larger organization and its way of doing things, a falling out with them was inevitable. Whereas Taft believed that no permanent good could be accomplished by defying the party, progressives felt that their principles and the welfare of the nation were more important, and they were unwilling to subordinate themselves to an institution that was moving too slowly, sometimes in the wrong direction. For Taft, however, responsible democratic government was impossible without strong, traditional parties.

Fourth, although Taft's constitution-

alism often obscured his faith in democracy, he remained to the last a true believer in the American dream of self-government. But he remained highly skeptical of progressive panaceas such as the initiative, referendum, and recall. Many have forgotten today that Taft had shared the goals of the progressives in his national career, but the tide of progressivism had simply overwhelmed his presidency and, particularly after his battles with Roosevelt in 1912, left him etched in the public mind as an apostle of reactionary Republicanism, an appearance that was very far from the truth. As the progressives called increasingly for the democratization of our institutions, and for more direct forms of democracy, Taft held more and more firmly to his faith that only constitutional democracy was worth preserving. He shared the American faith that the people, in the long run, could be trusted to make the right decisions; that, indeed, democracy would work. He believed that the Voice of the People was the Voice of God, but only under certain conditions. He wrote in 1912,

I fully and freely admit and assert that when the American people have had time to learn all the facts and have had time to consider their bearing, their deliberate judgment is a wiser and better guide to be followed by the state than the judgment of the most experienced statesmen, the most learned jurist, the most profound student of history. In this proper sense the Voice of the People is nearer to the Voice of God than any other human decision.³

The catch was that the Voice of the People had to be channeled and refined through our constitutional system, including an independent judiciary with the power of judicial review, before decisions approximating the ideal of justice could emerge.

To the extent that progressives threatened to short circuit the deliberation required by our institutions, Taft believed their proposals for more direct democracy would inevitably bring popular disappointment and disillusionment with the

could
END
HERE.

You're Invited...

*To attend a formal dinner party Friday evening, February ____ 2011
With Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow
Wilson*

Place: *Wellesley High School*

Time: *Dinner will begin promptly at 7*

R.S.V.P.: *With Ms. Berenson , Ms. Gordon or Ms. Bartels in person*

Topic of Discussion: *This discussion is not only celebrating the reunion of three Presidents of the Progressive Era, but it's a forum for discussion on a current economic, political or social issue that the Obama administration has been faced with. Former President Bush is co-sponsoring and wire-tapping the event so they can listen to each of these Presidents discuss their views on how the Obama administration has tackled a particular issue and how they would handle the situation if they were in the Oval Office.*

Task:

-Your group will write the transcript of the wire-tapped recording of the dinner party. The dialogue must explain each president's view on a particular economic, political or social issue and how he would have handled the situation if he was in office.

-Each President must have at least 3 lines.

-Their comments should reflect their views on the role of the President and the Federal Government,.

-There will be an empty seat at the table—you can choose any person to join in on the conversation..

Progressive Era Legislation and Constitutional Amendments	
Legislation/Amendment	Effect
Sherman Antitrust Act (1890)	Outlawed monopolies and practices that restrained trade, such as price fixing
National Reclamation Act (1902)	Provided for federal irrigation projects by using money from the sale of public lands
Elkins Act (1903)	Imposed fines on railroads that gave special rates to favored shippers
Hepburn Act (1906)	Authorized the federal government to regulate railroad rates and set maximum prices for ferries, bridge tolls, and oil pipelines
Meat Inspection Act (1906)	Allowed the federal government to inspect meat sold across state lines and required inspection of meat-processing plants
Pure Food and Drug Act (1906)	Allowed federal inspection of food and medicine and banned the shipment and sale of impure food and the mislabeling of food and medicine
Sixteenth Amendment (1913)	Gave Congress the power to collect taxes on people's income
Seventeenth Amendment (1913)	Instituted the direct election of senators by the people of each state
Underwood Tariff Act (1913)	Lowered tariffs on imported goods and established a graduated income tax
Federal Reserve Act (1913)	Created the Federal Reserve Board to oversee banks and manage reserve funds
Federal Trade Commission Act (1914)	Established the Federal Trade Commission to monitor business practices, false advertising, and dishonest labeling
Clayton Antitrust Act (1914)	Strengthened the Sherman Antitrust Act by spelling out specific activities businesses could not do
Eighteenth Amendment (1919)	Banned the making, selling, and transporting of alcoholic beverages in the United States
Nineteenth Amendment (1920)	Gave women the right to vote in all elections

For two decades after 1900, those who styled themselves Progressives had a significant influence on the quality and direction of American politics. Their contribution in defining the major social issues and priorities of the period was constructive and important. Reformers raised questions about the expanding power of the corporation and its effect on public life, and impelled society to confront the problem of the proper relation of government to business. Muckrakers revealed the hazards of unsafe consumer products, exposed the cozy relationships between large economic interests and some politicians, and brought to light the deplorable condition of the poor, the laboring child and woman, and the unprotected industrial worker. Conservationists criticized the disorderly exploitation of natural resources and warned of the consequences of heedless use. Finally, urban reformers focused attention on the ills of the city, stressing pervasive corruption, substandard housing, and insufficient services. To all these concerns, Progressives brought a belief in human progress, optimism about the future of society, and a deep moralistic fervor.⁷

To deal with the problems they had analyzed, reform-minded Americans followed two broad and often contradictory lines of policy. They sought, as they told each other, a government at once more effective and more democratic. Achieving greater efficiency required alterations in the structures and procedures of government to overcome or reduce the conditions of disorder associated with public life in the Gilded Age. The Progressive Era valued rationality, efficiency, and the apparent orderliness of science, and its reformers sought to make these qualities operate in the nation's public affairs.

For the nation's towns and cities, proposals for the commission and city manager forms of government identified the election of aldermen from geographically or ethnically defined districts as a source of corruption and waste. Commission government, begun in Galveston, Texas, in 1900, and refined in Des Moines, Iowa, after 1907, abandoned aldermen and substituted officials with specific responsibilities for police, fire protection, and housing and public utilities and, in theory, with a broader concept of the interest of the city as a whole. By the time of the First World War, the city manager form of urban government was replacing the commission variety because of its superior claims to nonpartisanship and effectiveness. Both plans, however, stressed the same themes—a reduction of political considerations in making decisions, the importance of efficiency, and the merits of "business" methods in running the city.⁸

The desire to regulate the business community on the basis of expertise and nonpartisanship produced similar structural reform impulses on the state and national level. The regulatory agency became the Progressive Era's most characteristic institutional response to the problem of managing an industrial society. Members of the Wisconsin Railroad Commission or the Federal Trade Commission, experts on the industry they were to oversee, could make decisions about economic policy without having to defer to partisan pressures. They would be able to locate and promote "the public interest" with a degree of certainty that no politician could equal.⁹

These proposals for structural change were laudable in the abstract but scholars have raised questions about their real purpose and practical application. Urban reform that diminished the power of representatives from an individual ward often deprived an ethnic or economic minority of political influence and shifted power to a different segment of the business community. Some American cities are now engaged in dismantling Progressive structures in response to charges that the local interests of minorities have suffered at the hands of a city government that identified "the public interest" with the welfare of the dominant economic or racial group. Similarly, the regulatory agency has come under fire as a device through which the corporations transformed expert regulators into expert instruments. In their concern with institutional change, the Progressives did not sufficiently appreciate that their structural proposals could produce conservative results in the hands of men unsympathetic to reform.¹⁰

Structural changes were not, however, the entire progressive story. The reformers believed that the conduct of politics would improve when provision for more citizen action occurred, and a variety of measures looked toward that goal. All of them reflected a distrust of political parties and were an effort to restrict the power of such formal organizations. To enable voters to suggest legislative remedies and to prod lawmakers into action, the initiative supplied a procedure through which the electorate could propose laws. When an issue became disputed, the referendum allowed for an expression of public opinion at the ballot box. Adopted first in the Far West, these measures gained increasing acceptance in the East

gressive Era, pp. 133-153; Bradley R. Rice, "The Galveston Plan: Birth of a Progressive Idea," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, forthcoming.

⁹ Grant McConnell, *Private Power and American Democracy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966), pp. 38-50; Stanley P. Caine, *The Myth of a Progressive Reform: Railroad Regulation in Wisconsin, 1903-1910* (Madison: The State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1970).

¹⁰ For an evaluation of the effects of these reforms, see Thomas K. McCraw, "The Progressive Legacy," in Gould, *The Progressive Era*, pp. 183-185, 187-190.

⁷ Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-51, provides a useful summary of what the progressives did.

⁸ Samuel P. Hays, "The Politics of Reform in Municipal Government in the Progressive Era," *Pacific Northwest Quarterly*, 55 (October, 1964), 157-169; Melvin G. Holli, "Urban Reform in the Progressive Era," in Gould, *The Pro-*

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16. Popular Government and Political Reform

and South before their popularity waned around 1915.¹¹

More controversial was the provision for the recall of elected officials and state judicial decisions. Recall sought to give citizens the power to reverse unpopular court rulings or to remove officers who failed in their trust but who were otherwise insulated from assault. Because it struck at judges and the courts—the bastions of conservative protection against the forces of democracy—the recall aroused the most intense passions of these three suggested reforms. When Theodore Roosevelt endorsed the recall of judicial decisions in 1912, he severely wounded his presidential hopes among moderate and conservative Republicans. The recall was, in any event, more discussed than adopted. Provisions for the recall of public officials were enacted in ten states between 1908 and 1915; recall of judicial decisions was confined to a single eight-year experiment in Colorado after 1913.¹²

The direct primary, the direct election of senators, and woman suffrage were more significant manifestations of the Progressive Era's effort to give the majority of voters "an easy, direct and certain control over their government." Pressure for primary elections to select candidates grew out of the power that party regulars exercised over nominating conventions and caucuses. To offset the advantages of their entrenched rivals, reformers like Robert M. La Follette of Wisconsin championed primaries as a way the people could select honest men to run for office. "Abolish the caucus and the convention," La Follette concluded in 1897. "Go back to the first principles of democracy; go back to the people."¹³ Primaries first appeared in Southern states around the turn of the century, and spread across the nation in the next decade and a half.

The direct election of United States Senators gained adherents in the first decade of the nineteenth century as Americans read of corruption and deadlock in the state legislatures that still selected the membership of the upper house of Congress. The Senate's place as the stronghold of conservatism, symbolized by its Republican leader, Nelson Aldrich of Rhode Island, further intensified pressures to remove this crucial electoral decision from the hands of weak or pur-

chasable state legislators. Such a reform would be, said Senator Joseph L. Bristow of Kansas, a leader in the struggle, "the most effective means of taking from organized wealth the control of the Senate, and indeed of our national politics." The work of Bristow, William E. Borah, and other Progressives guided the Seventeenth Amendment through the Congress in May, 1912, and 36 states ratified it within the next year.¹⁴

The drive for woman suffrage spanned the whole period of Progressive reform. Basically middle class in its membership and views, the suffrage campaign argued that votes for women would purify politics and bring a new moral force into public life. At the same time, the advocates of woman suffrage often stressed that female ballots could offset the votes of blacks and immigrants, perceived as sources of corruption, and suffragists frequently linked their cause with the ethnocultural goals of the forces of prohibition. Through the labors of an organization like the National American Woman Suffrage Association, voting by women spread out from its base in the Far West in the 1890's to other western states by 1914 and into the South and East during World War I. Ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment in 1920 put woman suffrage in the Constitution, beyond the reach of masculine tinkering, and completed the movement's national work.¹⁵

Democratic in purpose and theory, these reforms had ambiguous and flawed results. When Progressives spoke of enhancing the power of the "people," they often defined the "people" as Americans like themselves. As a result, the instruments of popular participation were not extended to the lower classes or the economically deprived. Laws to regulate elections reduced the size of the electorate and eroded the power of the political party; the direct primary did not bring a greater voter turnout; instead, it shifted power toward candidates with incumbent status or the money to sway a contest. Devices like the initiative and referendum have proved blunt instruments for expressing the popular will. They can assault minority rights or pose complex issues in a deceptively simple way, and are ideologically neutral and not necessarily mechanisms for reform. Even woman suffrage did not produce the heralded improvement in the quality of local and national politics.

After 1900, these national pressures for political change affected the Republicans first. For more than a decade, under the leadership of Theodore Roosevelt and William Howard Taft, the party debated its position on the role of government in an industrial society. Republican Progressives like Roosevelt,

¹¹ Jonathan Bourne, Jr., "Initiative, Referendum, and Recall," *The Atlantic Monthly*, 109 (January, 1912), 122-129, offers a favorable, contemporary assessment.

¹² Edwin Maxey, "The Recall of the Judges," *Forum*, 48 (September, 1912), 294-308, gives a sense of the feelings that the recall aroused among its opponents.

¹³ Benjamin Parke DeWitt, *The Progressive Movement* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1968, reprint of 1915 edition), p. 196; Robert M. LaFollette, *LaFollette's Autobiography: A Personal Narrative of Political Experiences* (Madison: The Robert M. LaFollette Co., 1913), p. 197; Arthur Wallace Dunn, "The Direct Primary: Promise and Performance," *The American Review of Reviews*, 46 (October, 1912), 439-445.

¹⁴ Larry Joe Easterling, "Senator Joseph L. Bristow and the Seventeenth Amendment," (M.A. report, University of Texas at Austin, 1973), pp. 29-30, and *passim*.

¹⁵ Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement, 1890-1920* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 1-13, 249-264.

3. FROM PROGRESSIVISM TO THE 1920s

Robert M. La Follette, and Senator Albert J. Beveridge of Indiana advocated a program of moderate innovation that included broadened federal power, vigorous presidential action, and a wide array of reform measures to curb corporations and achieve social justice. Republican conservatives regarded such policies as a threat to their vested interests and an unwise extension of national authority over the rights of private property. In a steadily worsening series of intra-party squabbles the conservatives established an ascendancy by the time of the Taft-Roosevelt split in 1912.

The political leadership of Theodore Roosevelt was a central element in the division within the Republican party. Recent skepticism about the merits of the strong presidency has prompted reappraisals of the long-standing favorable verdict on Roosevelt's years in the White House. His assertion of executive power, praised in the case of the Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902, seems less salutary in light of the miscarriages of justice toward black soldiers that grew out of the Brownsville incident of 1906. Theodore Roosevelt was a master of the techniques and artistry of electoral politics; he was less successful in the equally demanding and subtle craft of persuading fellow politicians to do what he wanted them to do.

In his first term, succeeding William McKinley, Roosevelt played down departures in public policy and concentrated on securing the Republican presidential nomination and election in 1904 "in his own right." He adhered to the broad lines of McKinley's program in substance, but injected a moralistic thrust and flamboyant excitement into the political wars against opposition in his party and against the divided Democrats. Increased rancor and ideological discord characterized the Republicans in Roosevelt's second term. Roosevelt's support for the Hepburn Act (1906) to regulate railroads, as well as his endorsement of pure food and meat inspection legislation, helped limit Democratic gains in the election of 1906, and demonstrated a positive Republican response to public clamor against social ills. Roosevelt's leftward shift after 1907 split the Republicans into distinct and bitter factions, and his relations with Congress ran rapidly downhill in quarrels over Brownsville, conservation, and innumerable other issues. But Roosevelt's biggest miscalculation was his insistence that William Howard Taft be his successor in 1908.

Taft's four years as President were unhappy for the man and disastrous for his party. Blunders over the tariff, conservation, and patronage, combined with the rising cost of living, ended Republican control of the House of Representatives in 1910. More important, President Taft and Roosevelt drew apart over questions of policy and personality until little remained of their once warm friendship. A former judge who distrusted reformers, Taft gravitated naturally to a

more conservative posture, while Roosevelt, out of conviction and calculation, became more Progressive. In late 1911, the former President decided, because of anger at Taft, to seek the Republican nomination in 1912. Roosevelt ran as the Progressive champion, but in his decision personal considerations played as large a role as reform goals. He was tired of private life, and craved power. A bitter and protracted contest ended with Roosevelt's bolt from the national convention in June, 1912, amid claims of fraud and deceit.

Neither Taft, running as the Republican candidate, nor Roosevelt, as the Progressive party nominee, won in 1912, but the Republican party was the biggest loser. The long-range result was a confirmation of the conservative dominance in the party. When he left, Roosevelt took with him much of the constructive energy, the appeal to a broad spectrum of American society, and the responsible programs that had animated the Republicans before 1912. Roosevelt returned to his political home in 1916, but his party never quite regained what it had lost in the disaster of 1912.¹⁶

Republican division was Democratic opportunity. In the 15 years after 1894, the Democrats labored to overcome the handicaps of Cleveland's presidency, the popular memories of the 1890's, and the leadership of Bryan. Still basically wedded to states rights and its negativist stance, the Democratic party showed some signs of rejuvenation in the elections of 1906 and 1908. Winning the House in 1910 took the Democrats to the limits of the strength to be gained from Republican discord. The party's problem as 1912 approached was to find a candidate who could seize this rare chance and win the White House.

Woodrow Wilson solved the Democratic problem and secured for his party an eight-year lease on the presidency. Rising swiftly from Princeton University through the governorship of New Jersey, Wilson defeated colorless but tough opposition to obtain the presidential nomination in July, 1912. Wilson's program in the campaign, the "New Freedom," sought to break up the power of large business organizations, in contrast to Roosevelt's "New Nationalism," which recognized the existence of economic bigness and proposed systematic supervision. In his early years in national affairs, Wilson combined an ability to evoke moral themes in his speeches, a cool and hard political intelligence, and a useful philosophical flexibility. The achievements of Wilson's first term offset the perennial Republican taunt that the Democrats could

¹⁶ For contrasting views of the Republicans in this period, see Horace Samuel Merrill and Marion Galbraith Merrill, *The Republican Command, 1897-1913* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1971); and Lewis L. Gould "The Republicans Under Roosevelt and Taft," in Gould, *The Progressive Era*, pp. 55-82.

not govern effectively. Wilson employed presidential power even more forcefully than had Roosevelt to win passage of the Federal Reserve Act (1913), the Underwood Tariff (1913), and the Clayton Antitrust Act (1914).

Despite Wilson's success as a party leader, the pressure of events pushed him and the Democrats toward policies that addressed the needs of key voting blocs like farmers, organized labor, and Progressives. After Republican gains in the election of 1914, Wilson faced difficult prospects for reelection in 1916. Accordingly, he wooed southern and western agrarian reformers, became more responsive to labor unions, and stressed the "peace" issue in the presidential contest. Against the Republicans the President marshaled a shaky coalition of the South and West, most Progressives, some sections of organized labor, and Americans who saw Wilson as a pacifist and his opposition as bellicose. In the interest groups that composed it, the Wilsonian coalition was a forerunner of the New Deal, but it was a volatile and tenuous combination, as the narrow Democratic victory indicated.

Wilson's second term subjected the Democratic party to a series of political shocks that left it in disarray by 1920. The military conduct of World War I was a success, but the home front experienced a wave of tensions. During the conflict, the Wilson administration abused civil liberties with practices that culminated in the excesses of the postwar "Red scare." The component parts of the Democratic alliance broke up in conflicts over farm policy, prohibition, and woman suffrage. After the war ended, the "high cost of living," labor unrest, and general economic dislocation further crippled the Democrats.

Woodrow Wilson's claims to presidential greatness seem likely to rest on something other than his last four years in office. Scholars recognize the appalling complexity of the problems he faced. Yet they give low marks to his management of the wartime economy and the transition to peacetime, deplore his encouragement of and acquiescence in attacks on civil liberties, and have even become more critical of his brainchild, the League of Nations. Wilson left the White House in March, 1921, a sick, broken man. His successor was Republican President Warren G. Harding. Harding's landslide election in 1920 was not simply an example of the adolescent foolishness of the American voter. A weak and ineffective President, Harding was an adept candidate who built a winning campaign on pervasive discontent with Wilson, the Democrats, and reform, and thereby restored the Re-

publicans to power.¹⁷

Historians disagree on the date when Progressivism faltered, but the inauguration of Harding marks a convenient terminal point. What had been the effects of the two and a half decades of political reform? For many groups in society the Progressive Era had meant little. The plight of blacks, the rural poor, and the unorganized urban worker remained desperate. Other significant social problems persisted. The excessive power of corporations had been restricted but not curbed enough, the situation of the cities reflected continuing ethnocultural tensions and governmental weakness, and the institutions of public policy showed unevenly the impact of Progressive effort. Ironically, in their concern to cleanse politics, the reformers had also weakened the national political organizations and had accelerated the decline of parties as governing forces. There was, in sum, ample basis for a sense of frustration and impotence among progressives as the 1920's began.

Yet too much emphasis on the negative features of the Progressive Era's politics is misleading. Constructive achievements, on balance, outweigh the drawbacks. Despite recent misuses of executive authority, the strengthening of the presidency under Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson was a healthy development. The major innovations of the period—regulatory agencies, election reforms, structural alterations—did not banish injustice from the nation. They did, however, mitigate the effects of an industrial society on many citizens. Most important, the politicians of the Progressive Era debated the principle that government bears a responsibility for the welfare of the diverse individuals and groups in society. For the succeeding half century, American domestic politics would pivot on questions of how far the reach of government should extend, which groups should receive what benefits, and what programs could best achieve desired goals. These were, in the largest sense, questions of detail. In the age of popular government and political reform, Republicans and Democrats posed the essential questions and began to frame answers that still set the limits for national political life.

¹⁷ John J. Broesamle, "The Democrats from Bryan to Wilson," in Gould, *The Progressive Era*, pp. 83-113; Robert K. Murray, *The Politics of Normalcy: Governmental Theory and Practice in the Harding-Coolidge Era* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1973), pp. 2-6.